

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
REQUEST FOR FILING APPLICATION UNDER RULE 1.53(b)

10/12/00
Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.53(b), please file a continuation/ divisional
of the pending prior PATENT APPLICATION of:
Inventor: NISHIUMI et al
Serial No. 08/836,731
Filed: May 22, 1997

Atty Dkt.: 723-933
C# M#
Date: October 12, 2000
Group: 2772
Examiner: C. Vo

JCG21 U.S. PTO
09/686761
10/12/00

For **USER CONTROLLED GRAPHICS OBJECT MOVEMENT BASED ON AMOUNT OF
JOYSTICK ANGULAR ROTATION AND POINT OF VIEW ANGLE**

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

This request for filing under Rule 53(b) is made by the following named inventor(s) (using the above-identified title):
Inventor(s): NISHIUMI et al

- Attached is a true copy of the prior application as originally filed including the Japanese application and English translation and substitute specification, claims, Oath/Declaration and drawings (if any) and abstract (if any). No amendments (if any) referenced in the Oath or Declaration filed to complete the prior application introduced new matter.
- Priority is hereby claimed under 35 USC 119 based on the following foreign applications, the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference in this application:

<u>Application Number</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Day/Month/Year/Filed</u>
7-288006	Japan	9 October 1995
PCT/JP96/02726	PCT	20 September 1996
<input type="checkbox"/> certified copy(ies) of foreign application(s) attached or		
<input type="checkbox"/> already filed on _____ in prior appln. no. _____	filed	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> already filed in 08/836,731	filed	May 22, 1997

Please amend the specification by inserting before the first line: -- This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. , filed , the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference in this application.--

The prior application is assigned to Nintendo Co., Ltd..
 Power of Attorney has been granted to Mark E. Nusbaum et al, Reg. No. 32,348 of Nixon & Vanderhye P.C., 1100 N. Glebe Rd., 8th Flr, Arlington, VA 22201.

Address all future communications to: Nixon & Vanderhye P.C., 1100 N. Glebe Rd., 8th Floor, Arlington, VA 22201.

Please amend the specification by inserting before the first line --This is a continuation of application Serial No. 08/836,731, filed May 22, 1997, now pending, the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference in this application.--

The Examiner's attention is directed to the prior art cited in the parent application by applicant and/or Examiner for the reasons stated therein.

Please enter the attached and/or below preliminary amendment prior to calculation of filing fee:

PTO-1449 Forms

The entire disclosure of the prior application above-referenced is considered as being part of the disclosure of this new application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

FILING FEE IS BASED ON CLAIMS AS FILED LESS ANY HEREWITH CANCELED

Basic Filing Fee	\$	710.00
Total effective claims 18 - 20 (at least 20) = 0	x \$ 18.00	\$ 0.00
Independent claims 3 - 3 (at least 3) = 0	x \$ 80.00	\$ 0.00
SUBTOTAL		\$ 2130.00
If "small entity," then enter half (1/2) of subtotal and subtract		-\$(0.00)
SECOND SUBTOTAL		\$ 710.00
Assignment Recording Fee (\$40.00)		\$ 0.00
TOTAL FEE ENCLOSED		\$ 710.00

Any future submission requiring an extension of time is hereby stated to include a petition for such time extension.
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our **Account No. 14-1140**. A duplicate copy of this sheet is attached.

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Signature: 

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

NISHIUMI et al

Atty. Ref.: 723-933

Serial No. Not Yet Assigned

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For: **USER CONTROLLED GRAPHICS OBJECT
MOVEMENT BASED ON AMOUNT OF
JOYSTICK ANGULAR ROTATION AND
POINT OF VIEW ANGLE**

* * * * *

October 12, 2000

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

In order to place the above-identified application in better condition for examination, please amend the application as follows:

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please add the Abstract of the Disclosure provided on a separate sheet herewith.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 8, line 11, delete “analogy” and replace with --analog--;

Page 17, line 11, delete “6” and make line 11 immediately follow line 10 by deleting the space between lines 10 and 11 and the indent at the beginning of line 11.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 6, line 2, change "any of claims 1 to 5" to -- Claim 1 --.

Claim 12, line 1, change "any of claims 7 to 11" to -- Claim 7 --.

Claim 18, line 1, change "any of claims 13 to 17" to -- Claim 13 --.

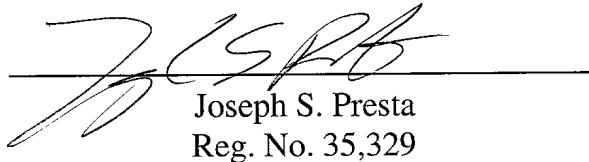
REMARKS

Favorable examination is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:



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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Three-dimensional image display game system and method for use with a display for displaying an object in a three-dimensional space, including an operation controlling device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported and a free end operable by an operator. The operation controlling device includes an inclination amount data output detector which detects an inclination amount of the operating member to output inclination amount data. The system further includes direction determining circuitry operable to determine a direction that corresponds to an inclination direction of the operating member based on the inclination amount data, and moving object direction determining circuitry which determines a moving direction of the object in three-dimensional space based upon the direction determined by the direction determining circuitry and a point of view angle at which the object is being viewed by the operator in three-dimensional space. A direction in which the operating member must be moved to cause forward movement of the object is offset from a forward direction of the operation controlling device by an angle corresponding to the point of view angle.

Amendment under Article 19

1. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system, including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on said display according to a program, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported and a free end operable by an operator, so that the image data is caused to be varied in accordance with movement of said operating member,

wherein said operating device includes an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount of said operating member, including a first direction component and a second direction component, to output inclination amount data, and

wherein said image processing apparatus comprises:

a direction determining means which determines a [moving] direction that corresponds to an inclination direction of said operating member [of the object in the three-dimensional space] based on the inclination amount data;

a moving direction determining means which determines a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space on the basis of said direction determined by said direction determining means and a camera angle viewing the object from a camera position;

a moving amount determining means which determines a moving amount of the object within one frame on said display on the basis of inclination amount;

an object [a] position determining means which determines a position of the object viewed from said camera position in the three-dimensional space in accordance with the moving direction determined by the moving direction determining means and the moving amount determined by said by said moving amount determining means; and

an image data generating [output] means which generates [outputs] image data for displaying the object [on said display] at a position determined [controlled] by said object position determining means.

2. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system according to claim 1, wherein said moving amount determining means includes a first calculating means that calculates the moving amount based on the inclination amount data, a moving amount storing means that stores an actual moving amount, immediately before, of the object, a comparing means that compares the actual moving amount in said moving amount storing means with the moving amount by said first calculating means, and a moving amount varying means that increases and decreases the moving amount calculated by said calculating means depending on a result of comparison by said comparing means.

3. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system according to claim 2, wherein said first calculating means calculates from the inclination amount data a moving amount which together with a predetermined value are calculated into the moving amount.

4. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system according to claim 2, wherein said moving amount varying means increases and decreases the moving amount in accordance with a function of moving amount in said moving amount storing means.

5. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system according to claim 2, wherein said moving amount varying means increases and decreases the moving amount in accordance with a constant value.

6. (Amended) A three-dimension image display game [processing] system according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said moving direction determining means

includes a second calculating means that calculates the inclining direction of said operating member based on the inclination amount data, wherein the moving direction is determined based on the inclining direction and a camera angle.

7. In a three-dimension image processing system including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on said display, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported, a free end operable by an operator, and an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount to output inclination amount data, so that the image data is varied depending on movement of said operating member, wherein a program storing medium is stored with a program for generating the image data, said program storing means comprising the program adapted for:

(a) determining a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space based on the inclination amount data;

(b) determining a moving amount of the object to be moved within one frame on said display based on the inclination amount;

(c) determining a position of the object in the three-dimensional space depending on the moving direction and the moving amount; and

(d) outputting the image data for displaying the object at the position thus determined.

8. (Amended) A program storing medium according to claim 7, wherein said image processing apparatus includes a storing means that stores an actual moving amount of the object, and said program is adapted for (b1) determining the moving amount based on the inclination amount data, (b2) comparing the actual moving amount

stored by said storing means with the determined moving amount, and (b3) increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount depending on the comparing result.

9. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for determining the moving amount from a moving amount which is calculated based on the inclination amount data and a predetermined value.

10. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance with a function of moving amount stored by said moving amount storing means.

11. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance with a constant value.

12. A program storing medium according to any of claims 7 to 11, wherein said program is adapted for (a1) calculating the inclination direction based on the inclination amount data, and (a2) determining the moving direction based on the inclination direction and a camera angle.

13. (Added) In a three-dimension image display game system including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on said display according to a program, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported, a free end operable by an operator, and an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount including a first direction component and a second direction component to output inclination amount data, so that the image data is caused to be varied depending on movement of said operating member, wherein a program storing medium is stored with a program for generating the image data, said program storing means comprising the program adapted for:

(a) determining a direction that corresponds to an inclination direction based on the inclination amount data;

(b) determining a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space on the basis of the direction determined in said step (a) and a camera angle viewing the object from a camera position;

(c) determining a moving amount of the object to be moved within one frame on said display based on the inclination amount;

(d) determining a position of the object viewed from the camera position in the three-dimensional space depending on the moving direction determined in said step (b) and the moving amount determined in said step (c); and

(e) generating the image data for displaying the object at the position thus determined in said step (d).

14. (Added) A program storing medium according to claim 13, wherein said image processing apparatus includes a storing means that stores an actual moving amount of the object, and said program is adapted for (c1) determining the moving amount based on the inclination amount data, (c2) comparing the actual moving amount stored by said storing means with the determined moving amount, and (c3) increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount depending on the comparing result.

15. (Added) A program storing medium according to claim 14, wherein said program is adapted for determining the moving amount from a moving amount which is calculated based on the inclination amount data and a predetermined value.

16. (Added) A program storing medium according to claim 14, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance with a function of moving amount stored by said moving amount storing means.

17. (Added) A program storing medium according to claim 14, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance with a constant value.

18. (Added) A program storing medium according to any of claims 13 to 17, wherein said program is adapted for (a1) calculating the inclination direction based on the inclination amount data, and (a2) determining the moving direction based on the inclination direction and the camera angle.

SPECIFICATION

THREE-DIMENSIONAL IMAGE PROCESSING SYSTEM WITH HIGHLY RESPONSIVE MOVING OBJECT DIRECTION AND SPEED CONTROL

5

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to three-dimensional image processing systems. More particularly, this invention is concerned with a three-dimensional image processing system for video game machines or the like, which is adapted to display an object in a realistic manner in a three-dimensional space on a display such that the object is moved in accordance with the direction and amount of inclination of an operating member, such as an analog joystick, of an operating device, e.g., a video game controller.

15

The conventional video game machine has a cross-shaped key which is provided on a controller so that the object displayed on the display is moved by a player's operation of the cross key. Such a cross key is a so-called digital joystick, by which only the direction of movement is designated for the object. With such a cross key, the speed of movement is impossible to designate.

- There also is a prior art method where moving speed of the object is varied depending upon the length of the time period over which a cross key is depressed. In such a method, acceleration or deceleration is determined for the object at a constant acceleration rate or a constant deceleration rate by each constant depression time period. Although, in this method, the moving direction and the moving speed of the object can be controlled even by using a digital joystick, there are disadvantages using this approach. That is, the moving speed for the object is merely varied at a constant rate of acceleration or deceleration as determined by software calculations, so that is impossible to arbitrarily control the speed of movement. Furthermore, the speed is determined by the period of key depression time, which requires that the cross key has to be kept depressed for a certain period or longer, resulting in poor responsiveness.
- Under such circumstances, the present applicant has proposed by Japanese Provisional Utility Model Publication No. H2-41342, laid open to public on March 22, 1990, a controller which has three contacts arranged in one direction on a cross key thereof so that the moving speed, besides the moving direction, is varied for the object by utilization of changing turning-on of contacts depending upon depression amount of the cross key.

In this prior art, however, the direction of movement is limited to four directions of upper, lower, left and right (and intermediate

directions thereof), and the speed of movement is varied only between three stages of speed. That is, in this prior art there still exists limitations on the moving direction and the moving speed.

Although there are already known game machines employing
5 an analog joystick for a control lever of an aircraft, such an analog joystick of the game machines are typically utilized for controlling, for example, the inclination of the aircraft, and wherein control is impossible for the moving direction or the moving speed.

10

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore the primary object of the present invention to provide an image processing system which is high in responsiveness and is capable of controlling the moving direction and the moving speed of a player controlled object.

15

The present invention is directed to a three-dimensional image processing system, including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on the display according to a stored program, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported and a free end

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operable by an operator, so that the image data is varied in accordance with movement of the operating member. The operating device includes inclination amount data output circuitry which detects an inclination amount of the operating member to output 5 inclination amount data. The exemplary image processing apparatus includes direction determining hardware and software which determines a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space based on the inclination amount data; moving amount determining hardware and software which determines a moving 10 amount of the objection within one display frame; position determining hardware and software which determines object position in the three-dimensional space in accordance with the moving direction and the moving amount; and an image data output circuitry which outputs image data for displaying the object on the display at a 15 position controlled by the position determining hardware and software.

The operating device is, for example, an analog joystick, which includes a base end supported rotatably with a given angle range and a free end for being operated by an operator so that the operating 20 member is inclined to arbitrary directions in accordance with operator operation. For example, an inclination amount data output circuitry such as an X counter and a Y counter detects the amount of inclination of the operating member to output inclination amount data.

The image processing apparatus includes a program storing memory, wherein the program storing memory is preferably an external storage device detachably attached to the image processing apparatus main body. Direction determining circuitry and moving amount determining circuitry comprised, for example, of a CPU under control of the stored program respectively determine moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space and moving amount of the object to be moved in one display frame, based on the inclination amount data from the operating device.

Specifically, count values of an X counter and the Y counter are converted by normalizing into a UV coordinate frame. The CPU determines the inclination amount (L) and the inclination direction (\tan^{-1}) by the UV coordinate value (u, v). The direction determining circuitry is, for example, the CPU, which determines under program control the moving direction of the object based on the inclination direction (\tan^{-1}) thereof and the point of view (camera angle) at which the object is considered to be "photographed" in the three-dimensional space. The moving amount determining circuitry is, for example, the CPU, which determines under the program control the moving amount of the object within one display frame, i.e., the moving speed, based on the inclination amount (L) and the maximum speed (max-speed).

Therefore the position determining circuitry determines the position of the object in three-dimensional space in dependence upon the moving direction and the moving amount. Consequently, the image data output circuitry outputs image data for display of the
5 object at the position thus determined.

In accordance with the present invention, the operation of one operating device such as an analog joystick provides control of the moving direction and the moving amount (moving speed) of the object.

10 The above and other objects, features, aspects, and advantage of the present invention will become more apparent from the ensuing detailed description of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 Figure 1 is a schematic illustrative view showing one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram showing an illustrative image processing apparatus in the Figure 1 embodiment;

Figure 3 is a block diagram showing in more detail an illustrative bus control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 4 is an illustrative view showing a memory map of a RAM in the Figure 2 embodiment;

5 Figure 5 is a block diagram showing a controller control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 6 is an illustrative view showing a memory map of a RAM in Figure 5;

10 Figure 7 is a perspective view of a controller in the Figure 2 embodiment as viewed from the top;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of the controller in the Figure 2 embodiment as viewed from the bottom;

Figure 9 is a block diagram showing in detail the controller and an extension device;

15 Figure 10 is an illustrative view showing data of an analog joystick of the controller and respective buttons;

Figure 11 is a flowchart showing the operation of a CPU in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 12 is a flowchart showing the operation of the bus control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment, i.e., an RCP (Reality Co-Processor) in Figure 3;

Figure 13 is a flowchart showing the operation of the controller
5 control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 14 is a flowchart showing a subroutine for varying the position of the object in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 15 is an illustrative view showing the relation between the inclinable range of the analogy joystick and the circular
10 correction therefore;

Figure 16 is an illustrative view showing the moving direction of the object.

EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Figure 1, there is illustrated an external view
15 showing an exemplary three-dimensional image processing system according to one embodiment of the present invention. The image processing system is, for example, a video game system, which includes an image processing apparatus main body 10, a ROM cartridge 20 (as one example of an external memory device), a

television type monitor 30 (as one example of a display means) connected to the image processing apparatus main console 10, a schematically represented illustrative controller 40, and a RAM cartridge 50 (as one example of an extension device detachably attached to the controller 40). The external memory device stores image data and program data for image processing for games, an audio data for music, sound effects, etc. A CD-ROM or a magnetic disc may alternatively be employed in place of the ROM cartridge. Where the image processing system of this exemplary embodiment is applied to a personal computer, an input device such as a keyboard or a mouse may be used as the operating mechanism.

Figure 2 is a block diagram of an exemplary image processing system. The image processing apparatus 10 incorporates therein a central processor unit (hereinafter "CPU") 11 and a bus control circuit 12. The bus control circuit 12 is connected to a cartridge connector 13 for detachably attaching a ROM cartridge 20, and a RAM 14. The bus control circuit 12 is connected to an audio signal generating circuit 15 for outputting an audio signal processed by the CPU 11 and a video signal generating circuit 16 for outputting a video signal, and further to a controller control circuit 17 for serially transferring operating data from one or a plurality of controller(s) 40 and/or data from RAM cartridge(s) 50. The controller control circuit 17 is connected to controller connectors (hereinafter abbreviated as "connectors") 181-184 which are provided at a front console face of

the image processing apparatus 10. A connection jack 41 is detachably connected to connector 181-184 and to the controllers 40 through a cable 42. Thus, the connection of the controller 40 to the connector 181-184 places the controller 40 into electric connection with the image processing apparatus 10, enabling transmission and reception of data therebetween.

More specifically, the bus control circuit 12 receives a command output as a parallel signal from the CPU 11 via a bus and converts it to a serial signal for outputting a serial signal command to the controller control circuit 17, and converts serial signal data input from the controller control circuit 17 into a parallel signal for output to a bus. The data output through the bus is processed by the CPU 11, and may be stored in RAM 14. RAM 14 is a memory for temporarily storing the data to be processed by the CPU 11, wherein read-out and writing of data is possible through the bus control circuit 12.

The bus control circuit 12, included in the image processing apparatus 10 in Fig. 2, for example, includes a coprocessor RCP (Reality Co-Processor) which may be a RISC processor. As shown in the Fig. 3 exemplary embodiment, the coprocessor RCP includes an I/O control 121, a signal processor 122 and a display or drawing processor 123. The I/O control 121 controls not only the transfer of data between the CPU 11 and the RAM 14, but also the flow of data

between the signal processor 122 or the drawing processor 123 and the RAM 14 or the CPU 11. That is, data from the CPU 11 is delivered to the RAM 14 via the I/O control 121, and further data from the RAM 14 is supplied to the signal processor 122 and the drawing processor 123 for processing therein. The signal processor 122 and the drawing processor 123 respectively process music signal data and image signal data and store such data in RAM 14. The I/O control 121 then reads the music signal data and the image signal data out of the RAM 14 according to instructions executed by the CPU 11 to supply respective signals to a music signal generating circuit (D/A converter) 15 and an image signal generating circuit (D/A converter) 16. The music signal is supplied via a connector 195 to a speaker 31 included in a TV monitor 30. The image signal is supplied via a connector 196 to a display 32 included in the TV monitor 30.

A disc driver 21 may be connected to the image processing apparatus 10 as shown in Fig. 3, in place of or together with the external ROM 20 wherein the disc driver can read out of or write to an optical disc or a magnetic disc. In this case, the disc driver 21 is connected to the RCP 12, i.e., the I/O control 121, through a connector 197.

Fig. 4 is an illustrative diagram showing memory areas assigned to CPU 11 memory address space. The RAM address space is accessible by the CPU via the bus control circuit, i.e., the RCP 12

and includes an image data region 201 for storing image data required to cause the image processing apparatus 10 to generate image signals for the game, and a program data region 202 for storing program data required for controlling predetermined CPU 11

5 operations. In the program data region 202, there are fixedly stored an image display program for performing image display processing based on image data 201, a time-measuring program for performing processing relating to the measurement of time, and a determination program for determining that the cartridge 20 and an extension device

10 50, hereinafter referred to, have a predetermined relationship. The RAM 14 includes further a region 141 for temporarily storing data representative of an operating state from a control panel or controller and a speed data region 142 for storing data indicative of the speed of object movement (the amount of movement over which the object

15 moves in one display frame).

The controller control circuit 17 is provided for transmission and reception of data in serial between the bus control circuit 12, i.e., the RCP, and the connector 181-184, and includes as shown in Fig. 5 a data transfer control circuit 171, a signal transmitting circuit 172, a 20 signal receiving circuit 173 and a RAM 174 for temporarily storing transmission and reception data. The data transfer control circuit 171 includes a parallel-serial conversion circuit and a serial-parallel conversion circuit for data format conversion during data transfer, and also controls write-in and read-out of the RAM 174. The serial-

parallel conversion circuit converts serial data supplied from the bus control circuit 12 into parallel data to provide it to the RAM 174 or the signal transmitting circuit 172. The parallel-serial conversion circuit converts parallel data supplied from the RAM 174 or the 5 signal receiving circuit 173 into serial data to provide to the bus control circuit 12. The signal transmission circuit 172 converts data for signal read-in control of the controller 40 supplied from the data transfer control circuit 171 and converts write-in data (parallel data) to the RAM cartridge 50 into serial data, which data is transmitted 10 through a corresponding channel CH1-CH4 to each of the plurality of controllers 40. The signal receiving circuit 173 receives data in serial form representative of an operating state of each of the controllers 40, input through a corresponding channel CH1-CH4 and read-out data from the RAM cartridge 50, to convert such data into parallel data to 15 provide to the data transfer control circuit 171.

The RAM 174 of the controller control circuit 17 includes memory regions or memory areas 174a-174h as shown in a memory map of Figure 6. Specifically, the area 174a stores a command for channel 1, while the area 174b stores transmission data and reception 20 data for channel 1. The area 174c stores a command for channel 2, while the area 174d stores transmission data and reception data for channel 2. The area 174e stores a command for channel 3, while the area 174f stores transmission data and reception data for channel 3.

The area 174g stores a command for channel 4, while the area 174h stores transmission data and reception data for channel 4.

Accordingly, the data transfer control circuit 171 operates to control writing to the RAM 174 data transferred from the bus control circuit 12 or data indicating the operating state of the controller 40 received by the signal receiving circuit 173. The data transfer control circuit 171 operates to control reading out of data from the RAM cartridge 50, and reading data out of the RAM 174 based on a command from the bus control circuit 12 to transfer such data to the bus control circuit 12.

Figure 7 and Figure 8 are external perspective views of front and back surfaces of a controller 40. The controller 40 is shaped such that it can be grasped by both hands or one hand, and has a housing having an exterior formed with a plurality of projecting buttons or control keys which, when depressed, generate an electric signal and a vertically-standing control member portion. Specifically, the controller 40 includes an upper housing and a lower housing. The housing of the controller 40 has an operating area formed on an upper surface in a planar shape extending sideways. The operating area of the controller 40 includes a cross-shaped digital direction switch (hereinafter referred to as "cross switch") 403 on a left side, a plurality of button switches (hereinafter referred to as "switches") 404A-404F on a right side, a start switch 405 generally at

a laterally central portion, and a joystick 45 providing analog input at a centrally lower portion. The cross switch 403 is a direction switch for designating the direction of movement of a player controlled heroic character or a cursor, which has upper, lower, left and right depression points used for designating movement in four directions.

5 The switches 404A-404F, may have different functions as defined by game software and may be used, for example, to launch a missile in a shooting game, or designate various actions such as jumping, kicking, or controlling an action game in many different ways. The

10 joystick 45 may be used in place of the cross switch 403 to designate the direction of movement of an object. It can designate direction over the entire angular range over 360 degrees, being utilized as an analog direction designating switch.

The housing of the controller 40 has three grips 402L, 402C
15 and 402R formed in a manner projecting downward from three locations of the operating area. The grips 402L, 402C and 402R are in such rod-shapes that, when held by the hand, they are contoured by the palm, the middle finger, the finger between the little and the middle finger and the little finger. Each grip is formed by a relatively
20 thin base portion, a thicker intermediate portion which thins toward an open end (downward in Figure 7). The bottom housing the controller 40 has an insertion aperture 408 formed at a centrally upper portion which projects from the underside for detachably attached, for example, a RAM cartridge 50 as an extension device.

The housing has a button switch 406L and a button 406R provided on left and right upper side faces thereof at locations corresponding to the positions to which the left and right index fingers of a player extend. On a back surface at the base portion of the central grip 5 402C, a switch 407 is provided as a switch having a function similar to the switch 406L when the joystick 45 is used in place of the cross switch 403 (or whose function may be varied in accordance with the game program).

The lower half of the housing on a back surface side extends 10 toward a bottom surface to have the aperture 408 formed at a tip end thereof. At a deep end of the aperture 408, a connector (not shown) is provided to which an extension cartridge 50 is to be connected. In the aperture 408 a lever 409 is also formed for ejecting the cartridge 50 inserted in the aperture 408. On a side opposite to the lever 409 in 15 the aperture 408 for insertion of an extension cartridge 50, a cut-out 410 is formed, which cut-out 410 provides a space for pulling out the extension cartridge 50 upon taking out the extension cartridge 50 by using the lever 409.

Figure 9 is a detailed circuit diagram of a controller 40 and a 20 RAM cartridge 50 shown as one example of an extension or expansion device. The controller 40 incorporates within the housing electronic circuits such as operation signal processing circuit 44

6, etc. in order to detect operating states of the switches 403-407 or the joystick 45 or the like and transfer detected data to the controller control circuit 17. The operation signal processing circuit 44 includes a signal receiving circuit 441, a control circuit 442, a switch signal detecting circuit 443, a counter circuit 444, a signal transmitting circuit 445, a joyport control circuit 446, a reset circuit 447 and a NOR gate 448.

The signal receiving circuit 441 converts a serial signal, such as a control signal transmitted from the controller control circuit 17, or write-in data to the RAM cartridge 50, etc. into a parallel signal to supply it to the control circuit 442. The control circuit 442 generates a reset signal to cause resetting (0) of measured values of an X-axis counter 444X and a Y-axis counter 444Y included in the counter 444, when the control signal transmitted from the controller control circuit 17 is a reset signal for an X, Y coordinate of the joystick 45. The joystick 45 includes photo-interrupters for the X-axis and the Y-axis to generate a number of pulses proportional to the amount of inclination of a lever in directions of the X-axis and Y-axis, providing respective pulse signals to the counters 444X and 444Y. The counter 444X, when the joystick 45 is inclined in the X-axis direction, measures the number of pulses generated in proportion to the amount of inclination. The counter 444Y measures the number of pulses generated in proportion to the amount of inclination, when the joystick 45 is inclined in the Y-axis direction. Accordingly, the

resultant vector, determined by the measured values in X-axis and Y-axis of the counter 444X and the 444Y, determines the moving direction and the moving speed for the displayed player controlled object or the cursor.

- 5 The counter 444X and the counter 444Y are also reset of their measured values by a reset signal supplied from the reset signal generating circuit 447 upon turning on the power supply, or a reset signal supplied from the switch signal detecting circuit 443 when the player simultaneously depresses two switches.
- 10 The switch signal detecting circuit 443 responds to an output command signal representing a switch state supplied at a constant period (e.g., at a 1/30-second interval in a frame period of a television), and reads a signal that is varied by the state of depression of the cross switch 403 and the switches 404A-404F, 405, 406L, 15 406R and 407 to supply it to the control circuit 442.

The control circuit 442 responds to a read-out command signal of operating state data from the controller control circuit 17, and supplies the operating state data of the switches 403-407 and the measured values of the counters 444X, 444Y to the signal transmitting circuit 445 in a predetermined data-format order. The signal transmitting circuit 445 converts these parallel signals output from the control circuit 442 into serial data to transfer them to the 20

controller control circuit 17 via a conversion circuit 43 and a signal line 42.

To the control circuit 442 are connected an address bus, a data bus, and a port control circuit 446 through a port connector 40. The 5 port control circuit 446 performs input-output control (or signal transmission or reception control) on data according to commands from the CPU 11, when the RAM cartridge 50, which is one example of an extension device, is connected to a port connector 46. The RAM cartridge 50 includes a RAM 51 which is connected to the 10 address bus and the data bus, and which includes a battery 52 for supplying power source to the RAM 51. The RAM 51 may, for example, be a RAM that has a capacity lower than a half of a maximum memory capacity accessible by using an address bus, and may, for example, be a 256 k-bit RAM. The RAM 51 stores backup 15 data associated with a game, so that, if the RAM cartridge 50 is removed from the port connector 46, the stored data is maintained by receiving power supply from the battery 52.

Figure 10 is a graphical illustration of a data format by which the image processing apparatus reads out data representative of an 20 operating state of switches 403-407 and joystick 45 from the controller 40. The data generated by the controller 40 is configured as 4-byte data. The first-byte data B, A, G, START, upper, lower, left and right, i.e., represents the state of switches 404B, 404A, 407, 405

and cross switch 403. For example, when the button B, i.e., the switch 404B, is depressed, the highest order bit of the first byte becomes "1". Similarly, the second-byte represents JSRST, 0 (not employed in the exemplary embodiment), L, R, E, D, C and F, i.e.,
5 the state of the switches 409, 406L, 406R, 404E, 404D, 404C and 404F. The third byte represents by binary digit the X coordinate value (measured value by the X counter 444X) which value depends upon the inclination angle of the joystick 45 in the X direction. The fourth byte represents by binary digit the Y coordinate value
10 (measured value by the Y counter 444Y) which value depends upon the inclination angle of the joystick 45 in the Y direction. Because the X and Y coordinate values are expressed by 8 bits of binary digit, the conversion into decimal digit makes it possible to represent the inclination of the joystick 45 by a numeral of from 0-255. If the
15 highest order bit is expressed by a signal denoting a negative value, the inclination angle of the joystick 45 can be expressed by a numeral between -128 and 127.

An explanation of the transmission and reception of data between the image processing apparatus 10 and the controller 40, as
20 well as the operation of object movement control according to the data from the controller 40 is set forth below.

Referring first to a Figure 11 flowchart for the CPU 11 of the image processing apparatus 10, an explanation is made concerning

image processing. At a step S11, CPU 11 is initialized based on an initial value stored in the program data area 202 in Figure 4. At a step S11, the CPU 11 set for example to the initial value of the moving speed of the object in the program data region 142 (Figure 4) 5 of the RAM 14. Then, at a step S12, CPU 11 outputs a control pad data request command stored in the program data area 202 to the RCP (the bus control circuit 12). Accordingly, at the step S12, the CPU 11 receives commands as shown in Fig. 10 at that time to store them to command accommodating storage sites 174a-174d for respective 10 channels. At this time, the count values of the X counter 444X and the y counter 444Y are provided to the CPU 11 as XY coordinate data.

Then at a step S12a the CPU 11 execute processes to alter the position of the object in accordance with joystick data from the 15 controller 40 which has been stored in the command accommodating sites 174a-174d for the channels (Fig. 6). Note that the step S12a is explained in detail below with reference to Fig. 14.

At a step S13, the CPU 11 carries out predetermined desired 20 image processing based on the program stored in the program data area 202 and the image data 201. While the CPU 11 is executing the step S13, the RCP (bus control circuit 12) is executing steps S21-S24 shown in Figure 12. Then, at a step S14, the CPU 11 outputs image data based on the control pad data stored in the control pad data area

141 in Figure 4. After completing step S14, the CPU 11 repeats to execute steps S12-S14.

The operation of the RCP (the bus control circuit 12) is explained in conjunction with Figure 12. At a step S21, the bus control circuit 12 determines whether or not the CPU 11 has output a controller data request command (a request command for data on switches of the controller 40 or data relating to the expansion device 50). If a controller data request command has not been output, the RCP waits until one is output. If a controller data request command has been output, the process proceeds to a step S22. At step S22, the bus control circuit 12 outputs a command for reading in controller 40 data to the controller control circuit 17. Then, at a step S23, the bus control circuit 12 determines whether or not the controller control circuit 17 has received data from the controller 40 to store it in the RAM 174. If the controller control circuit 17 has not received data from the controller 40 to store in the RAM 174, the bus control circuit 12 waits at step S23. The controller control circuit 17 has received data from the controller 40 to store it in the RAM 174, the process proceeds to a step S24. At the step S24, the bus control circuit 12 transfers the data of the controller 40 stored in the RAM 174 to the RAM 14. The bus control circuit 12, when completing the data transfer to the RAM 14, returns the process back to the step S21 to repeat execution of the steps S21 - the step S24.

The Figure 11 and Figure 12 flowcharts show the example wherein, after the bus control circuit 12 has transferred data from the RAM 174 to the RAM 14, the CPU 11 processes the data stored in the RAM 14. However, the CPU 11 may directly process the data in 5 the RAM 174 through the bus control circuit 12.

Figure 13 is a flowchart for explaining the operation of the controller control circuit 17. At a step S31, it is determined whether there is a write wait from the bus control circuit 12. If there is not a write wait, the data transfer control circuit 171 waits until there is a 10 write wait from the bus control circuit 12. If there is a write wait, at a next step S32 the data transfer control circuit 171 causes the RAM 174 to store commands for the first to the fourth channels and/or data (hereinafter abbreviated as "command/data"). At a step S33, the command/data for the first channel is transmitted to the controller 40 15 connected to the connector 181. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on the command/data to output data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. The content of the data is described below in explaining the operation of the control circuit 442. At a step S34, the data transfer control circuit 171 20 receives data output from the control circuit 442, to cause the RAM to store the data.

At a step S35, the command/data for the second channel is transmitted to the controller 40, in a manner similar to the operation

for the first channel at the steps S33. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step S36 data transfer and write-in processes are carried out 5 for the second channel. Meanwhile, at a step S37, the command/data for the third channel is transmitted to the controller 40. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step S38 data transfer and write-in 10 processes are carried out for the third channel. Furthermore, at a step S39, the command/data for the fourth channel is transmitted to the controller 40. The control circuit 442 of the controller 40 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step 15 S40 data transfer and write-in processes are carried out for the fourth channel. At a subsequent step S41, the data transfer circuit 171 transfers in batch the data which it received at the steps S34, S36, S38 and S40 to the bus control circuit 12.

In the above-identified manner, the data for the first channel to 20 the fourth channel, that is, the commands for the controllers 40 connected to the connectors 181-184 and the operating state data to be read out of the controllers 40, are transferred by time-divisional processing between the data transfer control circuit 171 and the control circuit 442 respectively within the controllers 40.

With reference to Figure 14, object position modifying step S12a in Fig. 11 is explained in detail. At a first step S301 in Figure 14, the CPU 11 corrects the joystick data, i.e., the X coordinate data and the Y coordinate data, from the controller 40. The joystick 45
5 (Figure 7) has a structure that can be inclined within an octagonal range 451 in a plane as shown in Fig. 15. Accordingly at the step S301, the data within the octagonal range of inclination is converted or corrected into data within a circular range 452. There is no necessity of executing the correcting step. That is, the subsequent
10 steps may be executed with the octagonal inclination range data.

At the step S301, the XY coordinate data for the joystick 45 is converted into coordinate data (u, v) in an UV plane as shown in Fig. 15. On this occasion, the maximum amount of inclination of the joystick 45 is normalized to "1". That is, the joystick 45 in the UV
15 plane in Figure 15 is allowed to incline within respective ranges of -1.0 # $u \# 1.0$ and $-1.0 \# v. \# 1.0$. This is because, since a square curve is utilized to calculate the moving speed S of the object as stated later, a low speed range thereof is to be extended. In this manner, it becomes possible to move the object at a considerably slow speed.

20 At subsequent steps S302, S303 and S304, the CPU 11 calculates or detects the amount of inclination L of the joystick 45, the moving speed S of the object and the moving direction ∇ thereof

according to following Equations (1), (2) and (3), based on the corrected joystick data (u, v),

$$L = \text{the square root of } "u^2 + v^2" \quad \dots \quad (1)$$

$$S = L^2 \times \text{max - speed} \quad \dots \quad (2)$$

5 $\forall = \tan^{-1}(u/-v) + \text{camera-angle}$... (3)

where, L: the inclination amount of the joystick, u, v: is the inclination amount in each axis (coordinate positions), S: is the moving speed of the object, where the max-speed: self-running maximum speed (e.g., 32 cm/frame), \forall : the direction of object movement. Equation (3) means that in a three-dimensional space the direction \forall of object movement is determined by the relative relations between the direction of joystick 45 inclination and the point of view or angle of a camera (camera-angle) at which the object is "photographed" in three-dimensional space.

15 After calculating respectively at the steps S302, S303 and S304 the inclination amount L of the joystick, the moving speed S of the object and the moving direction \forall thereof in accordance with Equations (1), (2) and (3), the CPU 11 at a step S305 compares the actual moving speed S1 of the object in the previous frame stored at 20 the speed data region 142 of the RAM 14 with the speed S calculated

at the step S303, determining whether they are equal to or not. If they are not coincident (S_1 is not = to S), the CPU 11 determines whether $S_1 > S$ at a next step S306.

- If the determination is "No" at step S306, the process of
- 5 acceleration is executed at a step S307, while if "Yes" is determined, the process of deceleration is executed at a step S308. In the acceleration process at the step S307, a predetermined acceleration A is added to the actual moving speed S_1 in the previous frame according to Equation (4). Note that the acceleration A is provided
- 10 as one example by following Equation (5):

$$S = S_1 + A \quad \dots (4)$$

$$A = 1.1 - S_1/43.0 \quad \dots (5)$$

- Also, in the deceleration process at the step S308, a predetermined deceleration B is subtracted from the actual moving speed S_1 in the previous frame according to Equation (6). Note that the deceleration B is provided as one example by following Equation (7):
- 15

$$S = S_1 - B \quad \dots (6)$$

$$B = 2.0 \quad \dots (7)$$

The reason for determining in Equation (5) the acceleration A based on the speed S1 in the previous frame is to avoid abrupt changes of speed. Although in Equation (7) the deceleration B was set as a constant, it may alternatively be set as a function of moving speed S1 in the previous frame in a manner similar to the acceleration A. Furthermore, the acceleration A may be a constant value.

If "Yes" is determined at step S305, the process proceeds to a step S309 as is the case when executing steps S307 or S308. At step S309, either of the moving speed S determined at the step S307 or the moving speed determined at step S308 is written in the speed data region 142 of the RAM 14, thereby updating the speed data.

At a next step S310, the position x and z of the object is calculated according to following Equations (8) and (9), based on the moving speed thus determined. That is, the position of the object is determined by the vector amount S and the vector angle \forall .

$$X = x + S X \sin \forall \quad \dots (8)$$

$$z = z + S X \cos \forall \quad \dots (9)$$

At a step S311, the CPU 11 outputs the position data determined by Equations (8) and (9) to the bus control circuit, or the RCP, 12. In response, the RCP 12 executes signal processing and

image processing in dependence upon the object position data given thereto, and outputs image data through the I/O control 12 to the D/A converter 16.

In this manner, the moving direction and the moving amount
5 (moving speed) of the object are determined in the above example based on the inclination amount data for the controller 40 joystick, thereby varying the position of the object in the three-dimensional space. In other words, the object is displayed at a position thus varied in the next frame on the display 32 (monitor 30).

10 Although the present invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is clearly understood that the same is by way of illustration and example only and is not to be taken by way of limitation, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

SPECIFICATION

Three-Dimension Image Processing System

FIELD OF ARTS

5 This invention relates to three-dimension image processing systems. More particularly, this invention is concerned with a three-dimension image processing system for video game machines or the like, which is adapted to display an object in a manner existing in a three-dimensional space on a display such that the object is moved in accordance with the direction and amount of inclination of an operating member, such as
10 an analogue joystick, of an operating device.

PRIOR ARTS

The conventional video game machine has a cross-shaped key which is provided on a controller thereof so that the object displayed on the display is moved by the operation of the cross key. Such a cross key is so-called a digital joystick, by which only the direction of movement is to be designated for the object, and the speed of movement thereof is impossible to designate.
15

There also is a method that the moving speed of the object is varied in dependence upon the length of time period over which the cross key as stated above is being depressed. In such method, acceleration or deceleration is given for the object at a constant acceleration rate or a constant deceleration rate by each constant depression time period. Although, in this method, the moving direction and the moving speed of the object can be controlled even by using a digital joystick, there involves a disadvantage as stated below. That is, the moving speed for the object is varied merely at a constant rate 20 of acceleration or deceleration determined by software calculation, so that it is
25

impossible to arbitrary control the speed of movement. Furthermore, the speed is determined by the period of time being depressed, which requires that the cross key has to be kept in being depressed for a certain period or longer, resulting in poor responsibility.

5 Under such circumstances, the present applicant has proposed an art by Japanese Provisional Utility Model Publication No. H2-41342, laid open to public on March 22, 1990, which has three contacts arranged in one direction on a cross key thereof so that the moving speed, besides the moving direction, is varied for the object by the utilization 10 of changing turning-on of contacts in dependence upon depression amount of the cross key.

In this prior art, however, the direction of movement is limited to four directions of upper, lower, left and right (and intermediate directions thereof), and the speed of movement is varied only between three stages of speed. That is, in this prior art there still exists limitation against the moving direction and the moving speed.

15 Incidentally, although there are already known game machines employing an analog joystick for a control lever of an aircraft, such analog joystick of the game machines is for controlling the inclination of the aircraft, and wherein control is impossible for the moving direction or the moving speed.

20 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

It is therefore the primary object of the present invention to provide an image processing system which is high in responsibility and capable of controlling the moving direction as well as the moving speed of an object operable object.

The present invention lies in a three-dimension image processing system, 25 including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data

for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on the display according to a program, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported and a free end operable by an operator, so that the image data is varied in accordance with movement of the operating member, wherein the operating device includes an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount of the operating member to output inclination amount data, and wherein the image processing apparatus comprises: a direction determining means which determines a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space based on the inclination amount data; a moving amount determining means which determines a moving amount of the object within one frame on the display; a position determining means which determines a position of the object in the three-dimensional space in accordance with the moving direction and the moving amount; and an image data output means which outputs image data for displaying the object on the display at a position controlled by the position determining means.

The operating device is for example an analog joystick, which includes a base end supported rotatably with a given angle range and a free end for being operated by an operator so that the operating member is inclined to arbitrary directions in accordance with operation by the operator. For example, an inclination amount data output means such as an X counter and a Y counter detects the amount of inclination of the operating member to output inclination amount data.

The image processing apparatus possesses a program storing means, wherein the program storing means is preferably an external storing means detachably attached to the main body of the image processing apparatus. According to a program in the program storing means, a direction determining means and a moving amount determining means comprised, for example of a CPU respectively determine moving direction of the object

in the three-dimensional space and moving amount of the object to be moved in one frame on the display, based on the inclination amount data from the operating device.

Specifically, the count values of the X counter and the Y counter are converted by normalizing into the UV coordinate. The CPU determines the inclination amount (L) and the inclination direction (\tan^{-1}) by the UV coordinate value (u, v). The direction determining means is for example the CPU, which determines the moving direction of the object based on the inclination direction (\tan^{-1}) thereof and the point of eye at which the object is considered to be photographed in the three-dimensional space (camera angle). The moving amount determining means is for example the CPU, which determines the moving amount of the object within one frame, i.e., the moving speed, based on the inclination amount (L) and the maximum speed (max-speed).

Therefore the position determining means determines the position of the object in the three-dimensional space in dependence upon the moving direction and the moving amount. Consequently, the image data output means outputs image data for display of the object at the position thus determined.

In accordance with the present invention, the operation of one operating device such as an analog joystick provides control on the moving direction and the moving amount (moving speed) of the object.

The above and other objects, features, aspects, and advantage of the present invention will become more apparent from the ensuing detailed description of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a schematic illustrative view showing one embodiment of the present

invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram showing in detail an image processing apparatus in the Figure 1 embodiment;

Figure 3 is a block diagram showing in more detail a bus control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

5 Figure 4 is an illustrative view showing a memory map of a RAM in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 5 is a block diagram showing in detail a controller control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

10 Figure 6 is an illustrative view showing a memory map of a RAM in Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a perspective view of a controller in the Figure 2 embodiment as viewed from the above;

15 Figure 8 is a perspective view of the controller in the Figure 2 embodiment as viewed from the bottom;

Figure 9 is a block diagram showing in detail the controller and an extension device; -

Figure 10 is an illustrative view showing data of an analog joystick of the controller and respective buttons;

20 Figure 11 is a flowchart showing the operation of a CPU in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 12 is a flowchart showing the operation of the bus control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment, i.e., an RCP (Reality Co-Processor) in Figure 3;

Figure 13 is a flowchart showing the operation of the controller control circuit in the Figure 2 embodiment;

25 Figure 14 is a flowchart showing a subroutine for varying the position of the object in the Figure 2 embodiment;

Figure 15 is an illustrative view showing the relation between the inclinable range of the analog joystick and the circular correction therefore;

Figure 16 is an illustrative view showing the moving direction of the object;

5

EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Figure 1, there is illustrated an external view showing a system structure of a three-dimension image processing system according to one embodiment of the present invention. The image processing system is, for example a video game system, which inclusively comprises an image processing apparatus main body 10, a ROM cartridge 20 as one example of an external memory device, a monitor 30 as one example of a display means connected to the image processing apparatus main body 10, a controller 40 as one example of an operating means, and a RAM cartridge 50 as one example of an extension device detachably attached to the controller 40. Incidentally, the external memory device stores image data and program data for image processing for games, and audio data for music, effect sound, etc. A CD-ROM or a magnetic disc may alternatively be employed in place of the ROM cartridge. Where the image processing system of this example is applied to a personal computer, an input device such as a keyboard or a mouse is used as the operating means.

Figure 2 is a block diagram of the image processing system of this example. The image processing apparatus 10 incorporates therein a central processor unit (hereinafter "CPU") 11 and a bus control circuit 12. The bus control circuit 12 is connected with a cartridge connector 13 for detachably attaching the ROM cartridge 20, as well as a RAM 14. The bus control circuit 12 is connected with an audio signal generating circuit 15 for outputting an audio signal processed by the CPU 11 and a video signal generating circuit 16 for outputting a video signal, and further with a controller control circuit 17 for

serially transferring operating data of one or a plurality of controller(s) 40 and/or data of RAM cartridge(s) 50. The controller control circuit 17 is connected with controller connectors (hereinafter abbreviated as "connectors") 181 - 184 which are to be provided at a front face of the image processing apparatus 10. To the connector 18 is detachably connected a connection jack 41 and the controller 40 through a cable 42. Thus, the connection of the controller 40 to the connector 181 - 184 places the controller 40 into electric connection to the image processing apparatus 10, enabling transmission and reception of data therebetween.

More specifically, the bus control circuit 12 receives a command outputted by a parallel signal from the CPU 11 via a bus to parallel-serial convert it for outputting a command by a serial signal to the controller control circuit 17, and converts serial signal data inputted from the controller control circuit 17 into a parallel signal for outputting it to a bus. The data outputted through the bus is subjected to processing by the CPU 11, storing in RAM 14, and so on. In other words, the RAM 14 is a memory temporary storing the data to be processed by the CPU 11, wherein read-out and write-in of data is possible through the bus control circuit 12.

The bus control circuit 12, included in the image processing apparatus 10 in Fig. 2, is specifically structured by an RCP (Reality Co-Processor) as an RISC processor, as shown in Fig. 3, which includes an I/O control 121, a signal processor 122 and a drawing processor 123. The I/O control 121 controls not only the transfer of data between the CPU 11 and the RAM 13, but also the flow of data between the signal processor 122 or the drawing processor 123 and the RAM 14 or the CPU 11. That is, the data from the CPU 11 is delivered to the RAM 14 via the I/O control 121, and further the data from the RAM 14 is supplied to the signal processor 122 and the drawing processor 123 for being processed therein. The signal processor 122 and the drawing processor 123 respectively

process music signal data and image signal data to store them again to the RAM 14. The I/O control 121 then reads the music signal data and the image signal data out of the RAM 14 according to instructions by the CPU 11 to supply respective signals to a music signal generating circuit (D/A converter) 15 and an image signal generating circuit (D/A converter) 16. The music signal is supplied via a connector 195 to a speaker 31 included in a TV monitor 30. The image signal is supplied via a connector 196 to a display 32 included in the TV monitor 30.

Incidentally, in place of or together with the external ROM 20 and disc driver 21 may be connected to the image processing apparatus 10 as shown in Fig. 3, wherein the disc driver can read out of or write in an optical disc or a magnetic disc. In this case, the disc driver 21 is connected to the RCP 12, i.e., the I/O control 121, through a connector 197.

Fig. 4 is an illustrative diagram showing memory areas assigned to memory spaces of the CPU 11. The RAM accessible by the CPU via the bus control circuit, i.e., the RCP, 12 includes an image data region 201 stored with image data required to cause the image processing apparatus 10 to generate image signals for the game, and a program data region 202 stored with program data required for predetermined operation of the CPU 11. In the program data region 202, there fixedly stored are an image display program for performing image display based on image data 201, a time-measuring program for carrying out measurement of time, and a determination program for determining that the cartridge 20 and an extension device 50, hereinafter referred to, are in a predetermined relationship. The RAM 14 includes further a region 141 for temporarily storing data representative of an operating state from a control panel and a speed data region 142 for storing data on the speed of object movement (the amount of movement over which the object moves in one frame on the display).

The controller control circuit 17 is provided for transmission and reception of data in serial between the bus control circuit 12, i.e., the RCP, and the connector 181 - 184, and includes as shown in Fig. 5 a data transfer control circuit 171, a signal transmitting circuit 172, a signal receiving circuit 173 and a RAM 174 for temporarily storing transmission and reception data. The data transfer control circuit 171 includes a parallel-serial conversion circuit and a serial-parallel conversion circuit for conversion of data format during data transfer, which also performs control of write-in and read-out of the RAM 174. The serial-parallel conversion circuit converts serial data supplied from the bus control circuit 12 into parallel data to provide it to the RAM 174 or the signal transmitting circuit 172. The parallel-serial conversion circuit converts parallel data supplied from the RAM 174 or the signal receiving circuit 173 into serial data to provide it to the bus control circuit 12. The signal transmission circuit 172 converts data for signal read-in control of the controller 40 supplied from the data transfer control circuit 171 and write-in data (parallel data) to the RAM cartridge 50 into serial data, which data is transmitted through a corresponding channel CH1 - CH4 to each of the plurality of controllers 40. The signal receiving circuit 173 receives in serial data, representative of an operating state of each of the controller 40, inputted through a corresponding channel CH1 - CH4 to each controller 40 as well as read-out data from the RAM cartridge 50, to convert them into parallel data to provide to the data transfer control circuit 171.

The RAM 174 of the controller control circuit 17 includes memory regions or memory areas 174a - 174h as shown in a memory map of Figure 6. Specifically, the area 174a is stored with a command for channel 1, while the area 174b is stored with transmission data and reception data for channel 1. The area 174c is stored with a command for channel 2, while the area 174d is stored with transmission data and

reception data for channel 2. The area 174e is stored with a command for channel 3, while the area 174f is stored with transmission data and reception data for channel 3. The area 174g is stored with a command for channel 4, while the area 174h is stored with transmission data and reception data for channel 4.

5 Accordingly, the data transfer control circuit 171 operates to write-in control to the RAM 174 data transferred from the bus control circuit 12 or data of operating state of the controller 40 received by the signal receiving circuit 173 or read-out data from the RAM cartridge 50, and read data out of the RAM 174 based on a command from the bus control circuit 12 to transfer it to the bus control circuit 12.

10 Figure 7 and Figure 8 are outside appearances at main and back surfaces of a controller 40. The controller 40 is in a shape that can be grasped by both hands or one hand, and has a housing having an exterior formed projecting with a plurality of buttons, when depressed, for generating an electric signal and a vertically-standing control portion. Specifically, the controller 40 is constituted by an upper housing and a lower housing. The housing of the controller 40 has an operating area formed on an upper surface in a planar shape long sideways. In the operating area of the controller 40, there are provided a cross-shaped digital direction switch (hereinafter referred to as "cross switch") 403 on a left side, a plurality of button switches (hereinafter merely abbreviated as "switches") 404A - 404F on a right side, a start switch 405 generally at a laterally central portion, and a joystick 45 for allowing analog inputting at a centrally lower portion. The cross switch 403 is a direction switch for designating the direction of movement of a heroic character or a cursor, which has upper, lower, left and right depression points to-be used for designating movement in four directions. The switches 404A - 404F, being different by game soft, are used, for example, to launch a missile in a shooting game, or designate various actions such as jumping, kicking, or taking a matter

in an action game. Although the joystick 45 is used in place of the cross switch 403 to designate the direction of movement of an object, it can designate direction at the entire angular range over 360 degrees, being utilized as an analog direction designating switch.

The housing of the controller 40 has three grips 402L, 402C and 402R formed in a manner projecting downward from three locations of the operating area. The grips 402L, 402C and 402R are in such rod-shapes that, when seized by the hand, they are contoured by the palm, the middle finger, the medical finger and the little finger, each of which is formed a little thin at a base portion, thick at an intermediate portion and thinner toward an open end (downward in Figure 7). The lower housing of the controller 40 has an insertion aperture 409 formed at a centrally upper portion which projects from the underside for detachably attaching a RAM cartridge 50 as an extension device. The housing has a button switch 406L and a button 406R provided left and right on upper side faces thereof at locations corresponding to the positions to which the left and right index fingers of a player extend. In a back surface at the base portion of the central grip 402C, a switch 407 is provided as a switch having a function alternative to the switch 406L when the joystick 45 is used in place of the cross switch 403.

The lower half of the housing on a back surface side extends toward a bottom surface to have an aperture 408 formed at a tip end thereof. At a deep end of the aperture 408, a connector (not shown) to which an extension cartridge 50 is to be connected is provided. In the aperture 408 is also formed a lever 409 for ejecting the cartridge 50 inserted in the aperture 408. On a side opposite to the lever 409 in the aperture 408 for insertion of an extension cartridge 50, a cut-out 410 is formed, which cut-out 410 provides a space for pulling out the extension cartridge 50 upon taking out the extension cartridge 50 by using the lever 409.

Figure 9 is a detailed circuit diagram of a controller 40 and a RAM cartridge 50 as one example of an extension device. The controller 40 incorporates within the housing electronic circuits such as operation signal processing circuit 44, etc. in order to detect operating states of the switches 403 - 407 or the joystick 45 or the like and transfer 5 detected data to the controller control circuit 17. The operation signal processing circuit 44 includes a signal receiving circuit 441, a control circuit 442, a switch signal detecting circuit 443, a counter circuit 444, a signal transmitting circuit 445, a joyport control circuit 446, a reset circuit 447 and a NOR gate 448.

The signal receiving circuit 441 converts a serial signal, such as a control signal 10 transmitted from the controller control circuit 17, write-in data to the RAM cartridge 50, etc., into a parallel signal to supply it to the control circuit 442. The control circuit 442 generates a reset signal to cause resetting (0) on measured values of an X-axis counter 444X and a Y-axis counter 444Y included in the counter 444, when the control signal transmitted from the controller control circuit 17 is a reset signal for an X, Y coordinate 15 of the joystick 45. The joystick 45 includes photo-interrupters for X-axis and Y-axis so as to generate the number of pulses proportional to the amount of inclination of a lever in directions of X-axis and Y-axis, providing respective pulse signals to the counters 44X and 444Y. The counter 444X, when the joystick 45 is inclined in the X-axis direction, measures the number of pulses generated in proportion to the amount of inclination. The 20 counter 444Y measures the number of pulses generated in proportion to the amount of inclination, when the joystick 45 is inclined in the Y-axis direction. Accordingly, the resultant vector, determined by the measured values in X-axis and Y-axis of the counter 444X and the 444Y, determines the moving direction and the moving speed for the object or the cursor.

Incidentally, the counter 444X and the counter 444Y are also reset of their measured values by a reset signal supplied from the reset signal generating circuit 447 upon turning on the power supply, or a reset signal supplied from the switch signal detecting circuit 443 when the player depresses simultaneously two switches previously determined.

The switch signal detecting circuit 443 responds to an output command signal representing a switch state supplied at a constant period (e.g., at a 1/30-second interval in a frame period of a television), and reads a signal that is varied by the state of depression of the cross switch 403 and the switches 404A - 404F, 405, 406L, 406R and 407 to supply it to the control circuit 442.

The control circuit 442 responds to a read-out command signal of operating state data from the controller control circuit 17, and supplies the operating state data on the switches 403 - 407 and the measuring values of the counters 444X, 444Y to the signal transmitting circuit 445 in a predetermined data-format order. The signal transmitting circuit 445 converts these parallel signals outputted from the control circuit 442 into serial data to transfer them to the controller control circuit 17 via a conversion circuit 43 and a signal line 42.

To the control circuit 442 are connected an address bus, a data bus, and a port control circuit 446 through a port connector. The port control circuit 446 performs input-output control (or signal transmission or reception control) on data according to commands by the CPU 11, when the RAM cartridge 50 as one example of an extension device is connected to a port connector 46. The RAM cartridge 50 allows a RAM 51 to be connected to the address bus and the data bus, which includes a battery 52 for supplying power source to the RAM 51. The RAM 51 is a RAM that has a capacity lower than a half of a maximum memory capacity accessible by using an address bus,

and comprised for example of a 256 k-bit RAM. The RAM 51 stores backup data associated with a game, so that, if the RAM cartridge 50 is removed out of the port connector 46, the stored data is kept by receiving power supply from the battery 52.

Figure 10 is a graphical illustration of a data format by which the image processing apparatus reads out data representative of an operating state of switches 403 - 407 and joystick 45 from the controller 40. The data generated by the controller 40 is configured by 4-byte data. The first-byte data represents B, A, G, START, upper, lower, left and right, i.e., the depression of pressing points for upper, lower, left and right of the switch 404B, 404A, 407, 405 and the cross switch 403. For example, when the button B, i.e., the switch 404B, is depressed, the highest order bit of the first byte becomes "1". Similarly, the second-byte represents JSRST, 0 (not employed in the embodiment), L, R, E, D, C and F, i.e., the depression of the switch 409, 406L, 406R, 404E, 404D, 404C and 404F. The third byte represents by binary digit the X coordinate value (measured value by the X counter 444X) which value is in dependence upon inclination angle of the joystick 45 in the X direction. The fourth byte represents by binary digit the Y coordinate value (measured value by the Y counter 444Y) which value is in dependence upon inclination angle of the joystick 45 in the Y direction. Because the X and Y coordinate values are expressed by 8 bits of binary digit, the conversion of them into decimal digit makes possible representation of the inclination of the joystick 45 by a numeral of from 0 - 255. If the highest order bit is expressed by a signature denoting a negative value, the inclination angle of the joystick 45 can be expressed by a numeral between -128 and 127.

Then explanations will be made on the transmission and reception of data between the image processing apparatus 10 and the controller 40, as well as the

operation as to movement control for the object according to the data from the controller

40.

Referring first to a flowchart for the CPU 11 of the image processing apparatus 10,

in Figure 11, explanations will be made for image processing. At a step S11, initial

5 setting is made by the CPU 11 based on an initial value (not shown) stored in the

program data area 202 in Figure 5. At the step S11, the CPU 11 set for example the

initial value of the moving speed of the object in the program data region 142 (figure 4)

of the RAM 14. Then, at a step S12, the CPU 11 outputs a control pad data request

command stored in the program data area 202 to the RCP, or the bus control circuit 12.

10 Accordingly, at the step S12, the CPU 11 receives commands as shown in Fig. 10 at that

time to store them to command accommodating sites 174a - 174d for respective

channels. At this time, the count values of the X counter 444X and the Y counter 444Y

therefore are provided to the CPU 11 as XY coordinate data.

Then at a step S12a the CPU 11 execute processes to alter the position of the

15 object in accordance with joystick data from the controller 40 which has been stored in

the command accommodating sites 174a - 174d for channels (Fig. 6). Note that the step

S12a will be explained in detail later with reference to Fig. 14.

At a step S13, the CPU 11 carries out a predetermined image processing based on

the program stored in the program data area 202 and the image data area 201. While the

20 CPU 11 is executing the step S13, the bus control circuit 12 is under execution of steps

S21 - S24 shown in Figure 12. Then, at a step S14, the CPU 11 outputs image data based

on the control pad data stored in the control pad data area 141 in Figure 3. After

completing step S14, the CPU 11 repeats to execute steps S12 - S14.

The operation of the RCP or the bus control circuit 12 will be explained by using

25 Figure 12. At a step S21, the bus control circuit 12 determines whether or not the CPU

11 has outputted a controller data request command (a request command for data on switches of the controller 40 or data on the extension device 50). If no controller data request command has been outputted, it is waited for outputting. If a controller data request command has been outputted, the process proceeds to a step S22. At the step 5 S22, the bus control circuit 12 outputs a command for reading in data of the controller 40 to the controller control circuit 17. Then, at a step S23, the bus control circuit 12 determines whether or not the controller control circuit 17 has received data from the controller 40 to store it in the RAM 174. If the controller control circuit 17 has not received data from the controller 40 to store in the RAM 174, the bus control circuit 12 10 waits at the step S23, while if the controller control circuit 17 has received data from the controller 40 to store it in the RAM 174, the process proceeds to a step S24. At the step S24, the bus control circuit 12 transfers the data of the controller 40 stored in the RAM 174 to the RAM 14. The bus control circuit 12, when completing the data transfer to the RAM 14, returns the process back to the step S21 to repeat execution of the step S21 - 15 the step S24.

Incidentally, the flowcharts of Figure 11 and Figure 12 exemplified the example wherein, after the bus control circuit 12 has transferred data from the RAM 174 to the RAM 14, the CPU 11 processes the data stored in the RAM 14. However, the CPU 11 may directly process the data in the RAM 174 through the bus control circuit 12.

20 Figure 13 is a flowchart for explaining the operation of the controller control circuit 17. At a step S31, the presence or absence of waiting for write-in from the bus control circuit 12 is determined. If not waited for write-in, the data transfer control circuit 171 waits until there comes to waiting-for-write-in from the bus control circuit 12. If waiting for write-in, at a next step S32 the data transfer control circuit 171 causes the 25 RAM 174 to store commands for the first to the fourth channels and/or data (hereinafter

abbreviated as “command/data”). At a step S33, the command/data for the first channel is transmitted to the controller 40 being connected to the connector 181. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on the command/data to output data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. The content of the data will be stated later in explaining the operation of the control circuit 442. At a step S34, the data transfer control circuit 171 receives data outputted from the control circuit 442, to cause the RAM to store the data.

From now on, at a step S35 the command/data for the second channel is transmitted to the controller 40, in a manner similar to the operation for the first channel at the steps S33 and S34. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step S36 are carried out the processes of data transfer and write-in for the second channel. Meanwhile, at a step S37, the command/data for the fourth channel is transmitted to the controller 40. The control circuit 442 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step S38 are carried out the processes of data transfer and write-in for the third channel. Furthermore, at a step S39, the command/data for the fourth channel is transmitted to the controller 40. The control circuit 442 of the controller 40 performs a predetermined operation based on this command/data to output the data to be transmitted to the image processing apparatus 10. At a step S40 are carried out the processes of data transfer and write-in for the fourth channel. At a subsequent step S41, the data transfer circuit 171 transfer in batch the data which have received at the steps S34, S36, S38 and S40 to the bus control circuit 12.

In the manner as stated above, the data for the first channel to the fourth channel, that is, the commands for the controllers 40 being connected to the connectors 181 - 184

and the operating state data to be read out of the controllers 40, are transferred by time-divisional processing between the data transfer control circuit 171 and the control circuit 442 respectively within the controllers 40.

With referring to Figure 14 the step S12a in Fig. 11 will be explained in detail. At a first step S301 in Figure 11, the CPU 11 makes correction to the joystick data, i.e., the X coordinate data and the Y coordinate data, from the controller 40. The joystick 45 (Figure 7) has a structure that can be inclined within an octagonal range 451 in a plane as shown Fig. 15, and accordingly at the step S301 the data within the octagonal range of inclination is converted or corrected into data within a circular range 452. Incidentally, there is no necessity of especially executing the correcting step. That is, the subsequent steps may be executed by the data of the octagonal inclination range.

At the step S301, the XY coordinate data for the joystick 45 is converted into coordinate data (u, v) in an UV plane as shown in Fig. 15. On this occasion, the maximum amount of inclination of the joystick 45 is normalized to "1". That is, the joystick 45 in the UV plane in Figure 15 is allowed to incline within respective ranges of $-1.0 \leq u \leq 1.0$ and $-1.0 \leq v \leq 1.0$. This is because, since a square curve is utilized to calculate the moving speed S of the object as stated later, a low speed range thereof is to be extended. By doing so, it becomes possible to move the object at a considerably slow speed.

At subsequent steps S302, S303 and S304, the CPU 11 calculates or detects the amount of inclination L of the joystick 45, the moving speed S of the object and the moving direction α thereof according to following Equations (1), (2) and (3), based on the corrected joystick data (u, v),

$$L = \sqrt{u^2 + v^2} \quad \dots (1)$$

$$S = L^2 \times \text{max - speed} \quad \dots (2)$$

$$\alpha = \tan^{-1} (u / -v) + \text{camera-angle} \dots (3)$$

where, L: the inclination amount of the joystick, u, v: the inclination amount in each axis (coordinate positions), S: the moving speed of the object, max-speed: self-running maximum speed (e.g., 32 cm/frame), α : the direction of object movement.

5 Equation (3) means that in a three-dimensional space the direction α of object movement is determined by the relative relations between the direction of joystick 45 inclination and the angle of a camera (camera-angle).

After calculating respectively at the steps S302, S303 and S304 the inclination amount L of the joystick, the moving speed S of the object and the moving direction α thereof in accordance with Equations (1), (2) and (3), the CPU 11 at a step S305 compares the actual moving speed S1 of the object in the previous frame stored at the speed data region 142 of the RAM 14 with the speed S calculated at the step S303, determining whether they are equal to or not. If they are not coincident ($S1 \neq S$), the CPU 11 determines whether $S1 > S$ stands or not at a next step S306.

15 If the determination is "No" at the step S306, the process of acceleration is executed at a step S307, while if "Yes" is determined the process of deceleration is executed at a step S308. In the acceleration process at the step S307, a predetermined acceleration A is added to the actual moving speed S1 in the previous frame according to Equation (4). Note that the acceleration A is provided as one example by following

20 Equation (5):

$$S = S1 + A \dots (4)$$

$$A = 1.1 - S1 / 43.0 \dots (5)$$

Also, in the deceleration process at the step S308, a predetermined deceleration B is subtracted from the actual moving speed S1 in the previous frame according to

Equation (6). Note that the deceleration B is provided as one example by following

Equation (7):

$$S = S_1 - B \quad \dots \quad (6)$$

$$B = 2.0 \quad \dots \quad (7)$$

5 The reason of determining in Equation (5) the acceleration A based on the speed S₁ in the previous frame is to avoid against abrupt change of speed. Although in Equation (7) the deceleration B was set as a constant, it may alternatively be set as a function of moving speed S₁ in the previous frame in a manner similar to the acceleration A. Furthermore, the acceleration A may be a constant value.

10 If "Yes" is determined at the step S305, the process proceeds to a step S309 in a manner similar to the case of executing the steps S307 or S308. At the step S309, either of the moving speed S determined at the step S307 or the moving speed determined at the step S308 is written in the speed data region 142 of the RAM 14, thereby updating the speed data.

15 At a next step S310, the position x and z of the object is calculated according to following Equations (8) and (9), based on the moving speed thus determined. That is, the position of the object is determined by the vector amount S and the vector angle α .

$$x = x + S \times \sin \alpha \quad \dots \quad (8)$$

$$z = z + S \times \cos \alpha \quad \dots \quad (9)$$

20 At a step S311, the CPU 11 outputs the position data determined by Equations (8) and (9) to the bus control circuit, or the RCP, 12. In response, the RCP 12 executes signal processing and image processing in dependence upon the object position data given thereto, and outputs image data through the I/O control 12 to the D/A converter 16.

25 In this manner, the moving direction and the moving amount (moving speed) of the object are determined in the above example based on the inclination amount data for

the joystick of the controller 40; thereby varying the position of the object in the three-dimensional space. In other words, the object is displayed at a position thus varied in the next frame on the display 32 (monitor 30).

Although the present invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is clearly understood that the same is by way of illustration and example only and is not to be taken by way of limitation, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A three-dimension image processing system, including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on said display according to a program, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported and a free end operable by an operator, so that the image data is varied in accordance with movement of said operating member,

wherein said operating device includes an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount of said operating member to output inclination amount data, and

wherein said image processing apparatus comprises:

a direction determining means which determines a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space based on the inclination amount data;

a moving amount determining means which determines a moving amount
15 of the object within one frame on said display;

a position determining means which determines a position of the object in the three-dimensional space in accordance with the moving direction and the moving amount; and

an image data output means which outputs image data for displaying the object on said display at a position controlled by said position determining means.

2. A three-dimension image processing system according to claim 1, wherein
said moving amount determining means includes a first calculating means that calculates
the moving amount based on the inclination amount data, a moving amount storing
means that stores an actual moving amount, immediately before, of the object, a
comparing means that compares the actual moving amount in said moving amount

storing means with the moving amount by said first calculating means, and a moving amount varying means that increases and decreases the moving amount calculated by said calculating means depending on a result of comparison by said comparing means.

3. A three-dimension image processing system according to claim 2, wherein
5 said first calculating means calculates from the inclination amount data a moving amount which together with a predetermined value are calculated into the moving amount.

4. A three-dimension image processing system according to claim 2, wherein
10 said moving amount varying means increases and decreases the moving amount in accordance with a function of moving amount in said moving amount storing means.

5. A three-dimension image processing system according to claim 2, wherein
said moving amount varying means increases and decreases the moving amount in accordance with a constant value.

6. A three-dimension image processing system according to any of claims 1 to 5,
15 wherein said moving direction determining means includes a second calculating means that calculates the inclining direction of said operating member based on the inclination amount data, wherein the moving direction is determined based on the inclining direction and a camera angle.

7. In a three-dimension image processing system including an image processing apparatus connected to a display to generate image data for displaying an object existing in a three-dimensional space on said display, and an operating device including an operating member having a base end rotatably supported, a free end operable by an operator, and an inclination amount data output means which detects an inclination amount to output inclination amount data, so that the image data is varied depending on movement of said operating member, wherein a program storing medium is stored with a

program for generating the image data, said program storing means comprising the program adapted for:

(a) determining a moving direction of the object in the three-dimensional space based on the inclination amount data;

5 (b) determining a moving amount of the object to be moved within one frame on said display based on the inclination amount;

(c) determining a position of the object in the three-dimensional space depending on the moving direction and the moving amount; and

10 (d) outputting the image data for displaying the object at the position thus determined.

8. A program storing medium according to claim 7, wherein said image processing apparatus includes a storing means that stores an actual moving amount of the object, and said program is adapted for (d1) determining the moving amount based on the inclination amount data, (d2) comparing the actual moving amount stored by said storing means with the determined moving amount, and (d3) increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount depending on the comparing result.

9. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for determining the moving amount from a moving amount which is calculated based on the inclination amount data and a predetermined value.

20 10. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance with a function of moving amount stored by said moving amount storing means.

11. A program storing medium according to claim 8, wherein said program is adapted for increasing and decreasing the determined moving amount in accordance 25 with a constant value.

12. A program storing medium according to any of claims 7 to 11, wherein said program is adapted for (a1) calculating the inclination direction based on the inclination amount data, and (a2) determining the moving direction based on the inclination direction and a camera angle.

ABSTRACT

A three-dimension image processing system includes an image processing apparatus and an operating device connected thereto. The operating device includes an analog joystick, and an X counter and a Y counter for outputting inclination amount data for analog joystick. The count values of the X counter and the Y counter are converted into UV coordinate data. The CPU determines an inclination amount as well as an inclination direction. The CPU determines a moving direction of the object based on the inclination direction and a point of eye from which the object is considered to be photographed in a three-dimensional space (camera angle). The CPU determines a moving amount of the object within one frame, i.e., moving speed.

FIG. 1

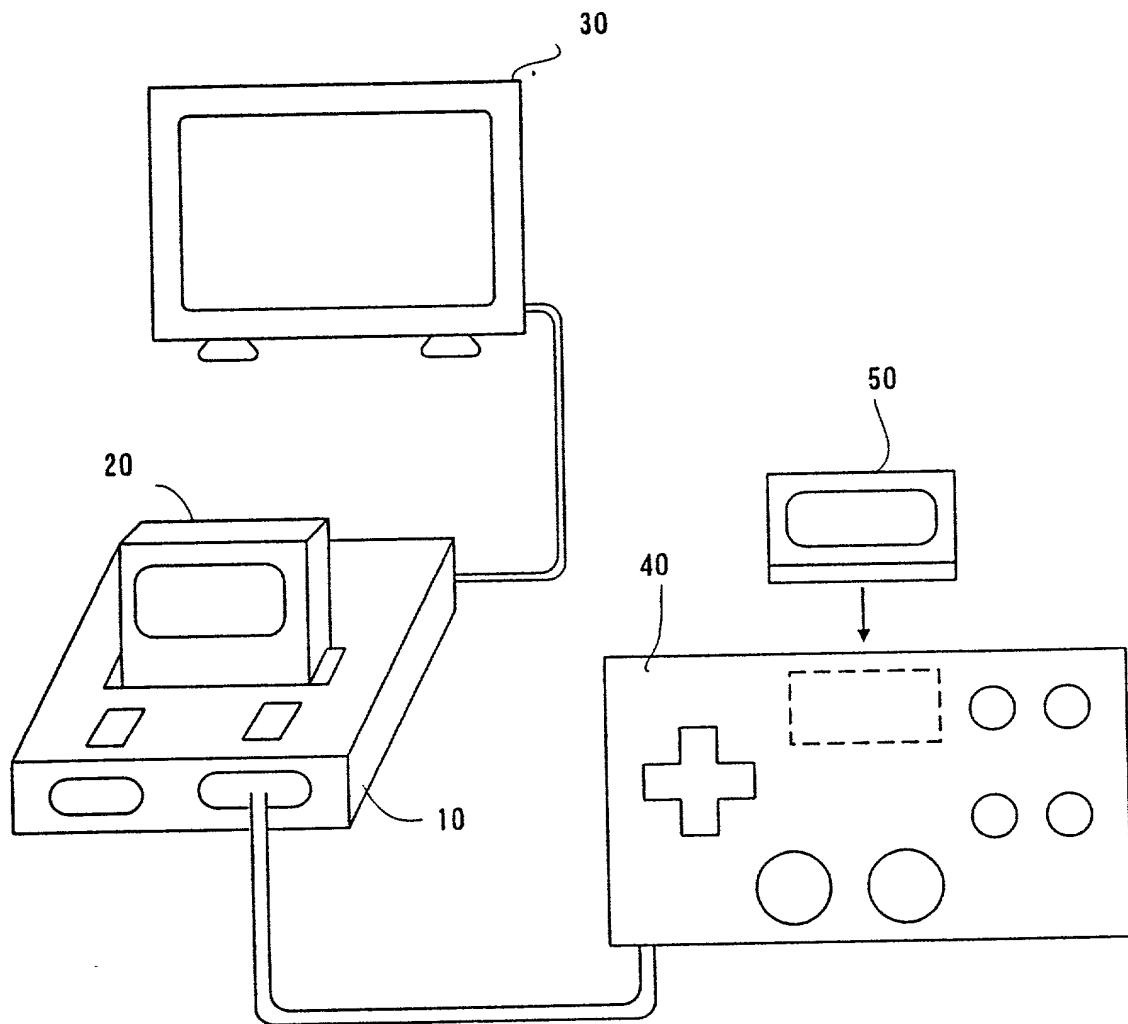


FIG. 2

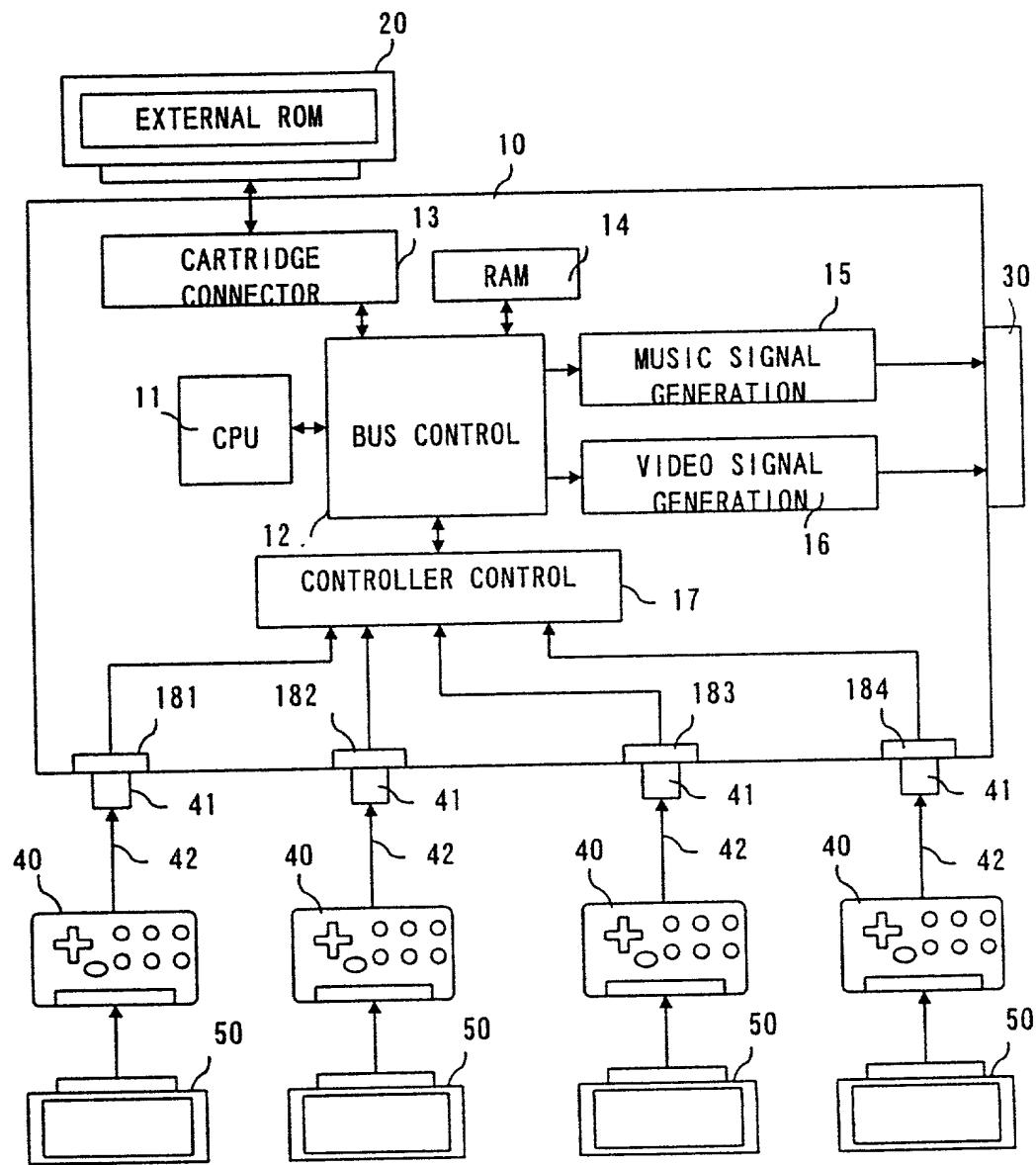


FIG. 3

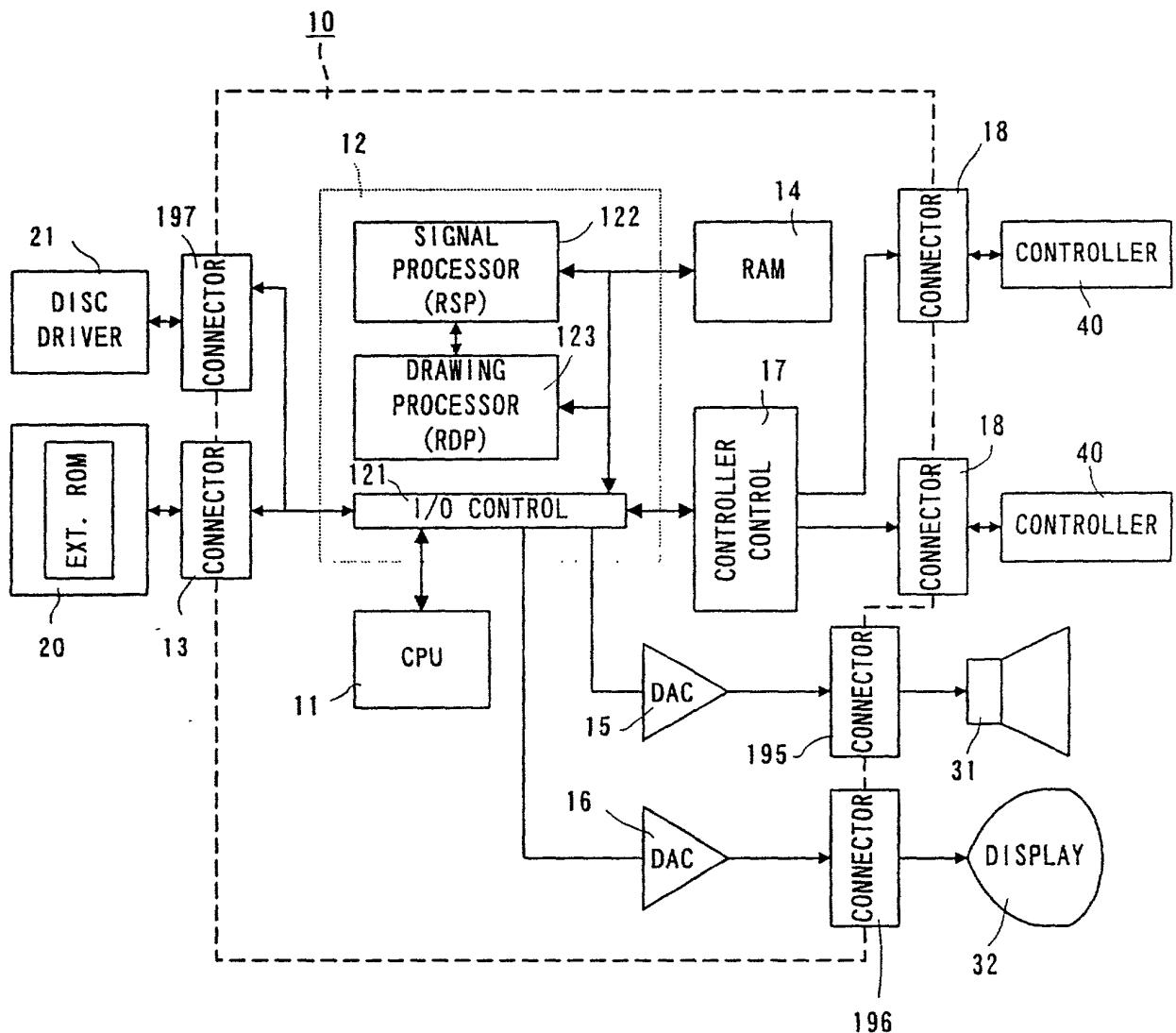


FIG. 4

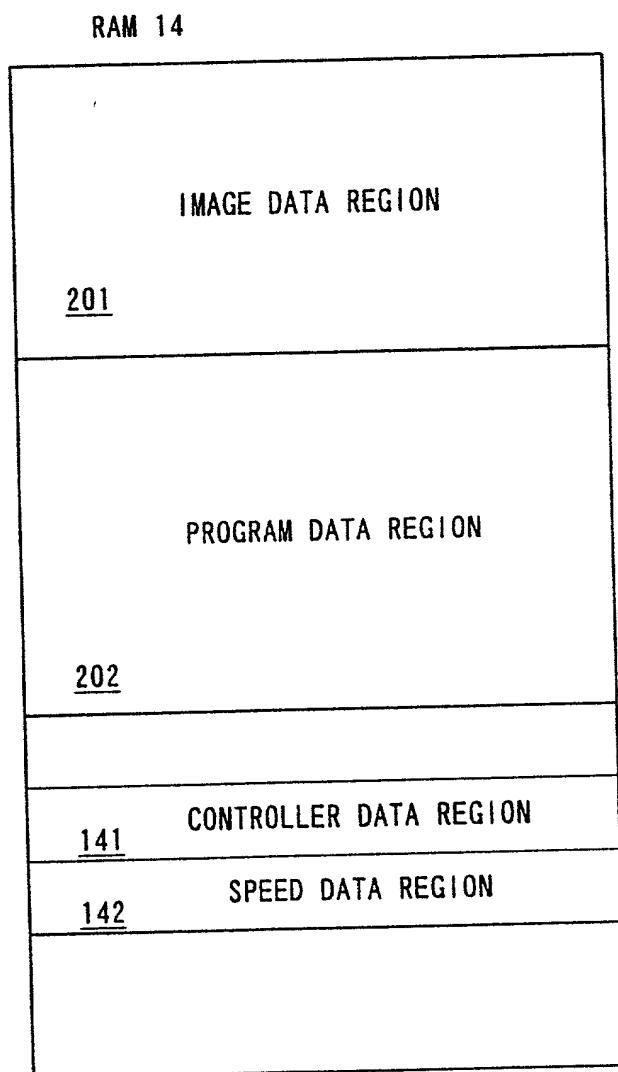


FIG. 5

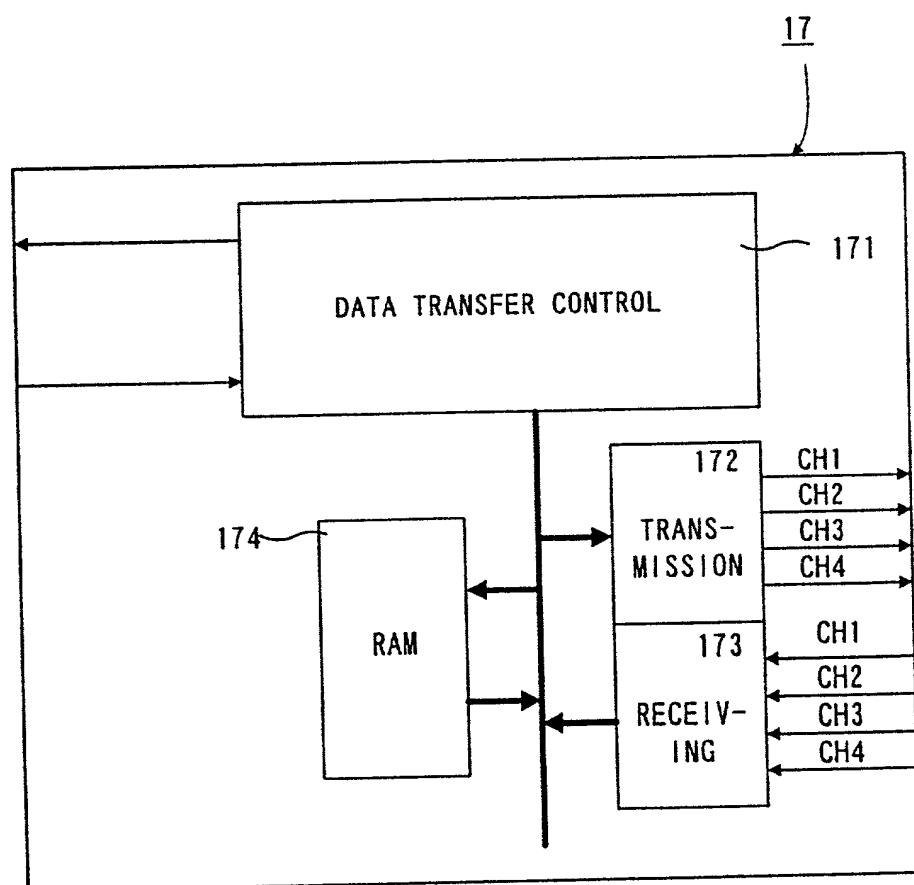


FIG. 6

RAM 174

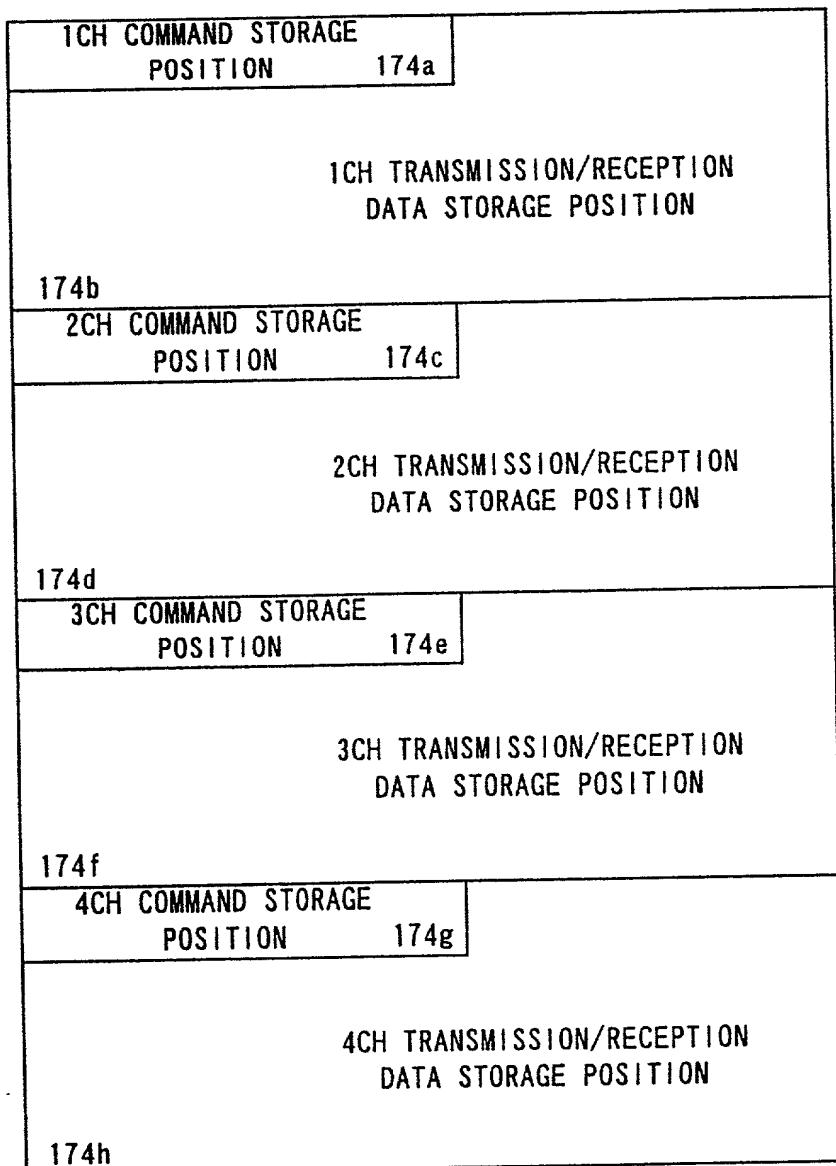


FIG. 7

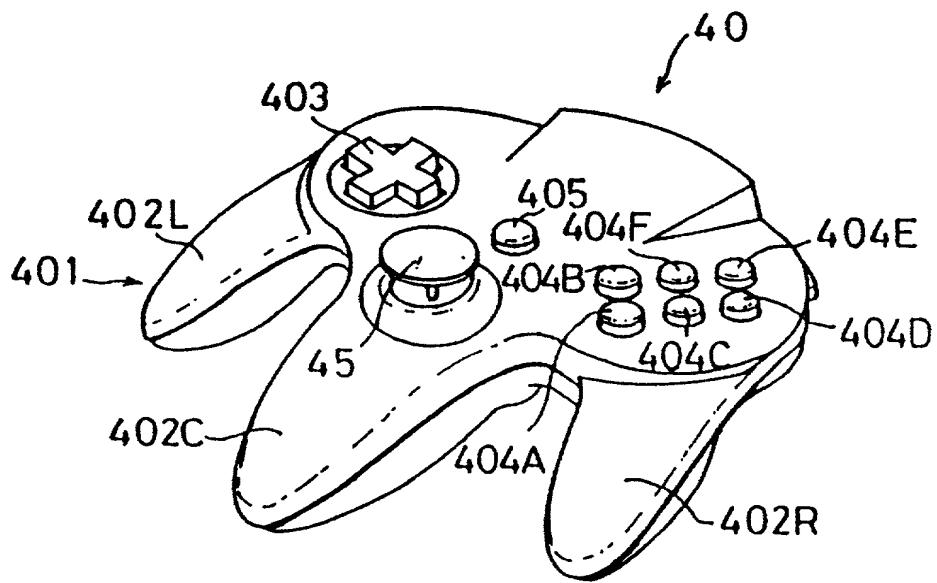


FIG. 8

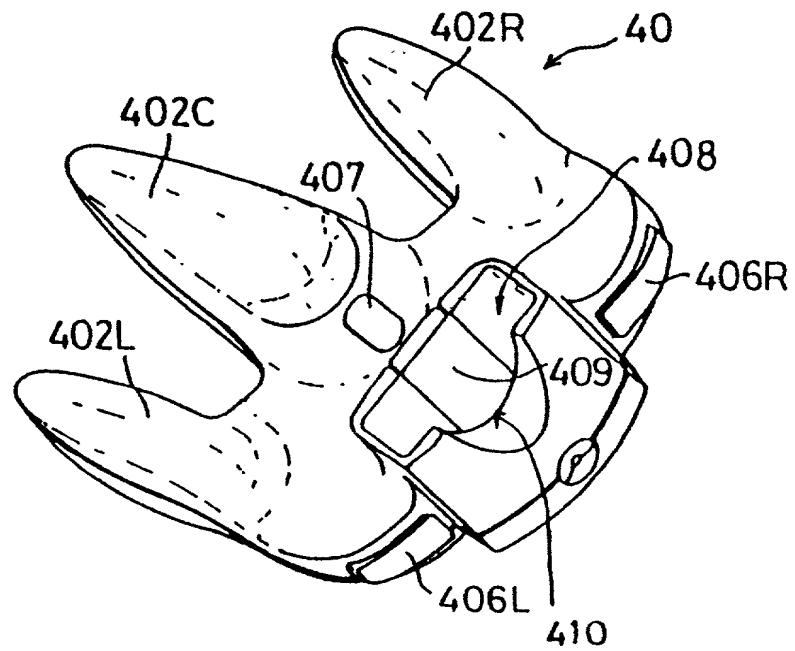


FIG. 9

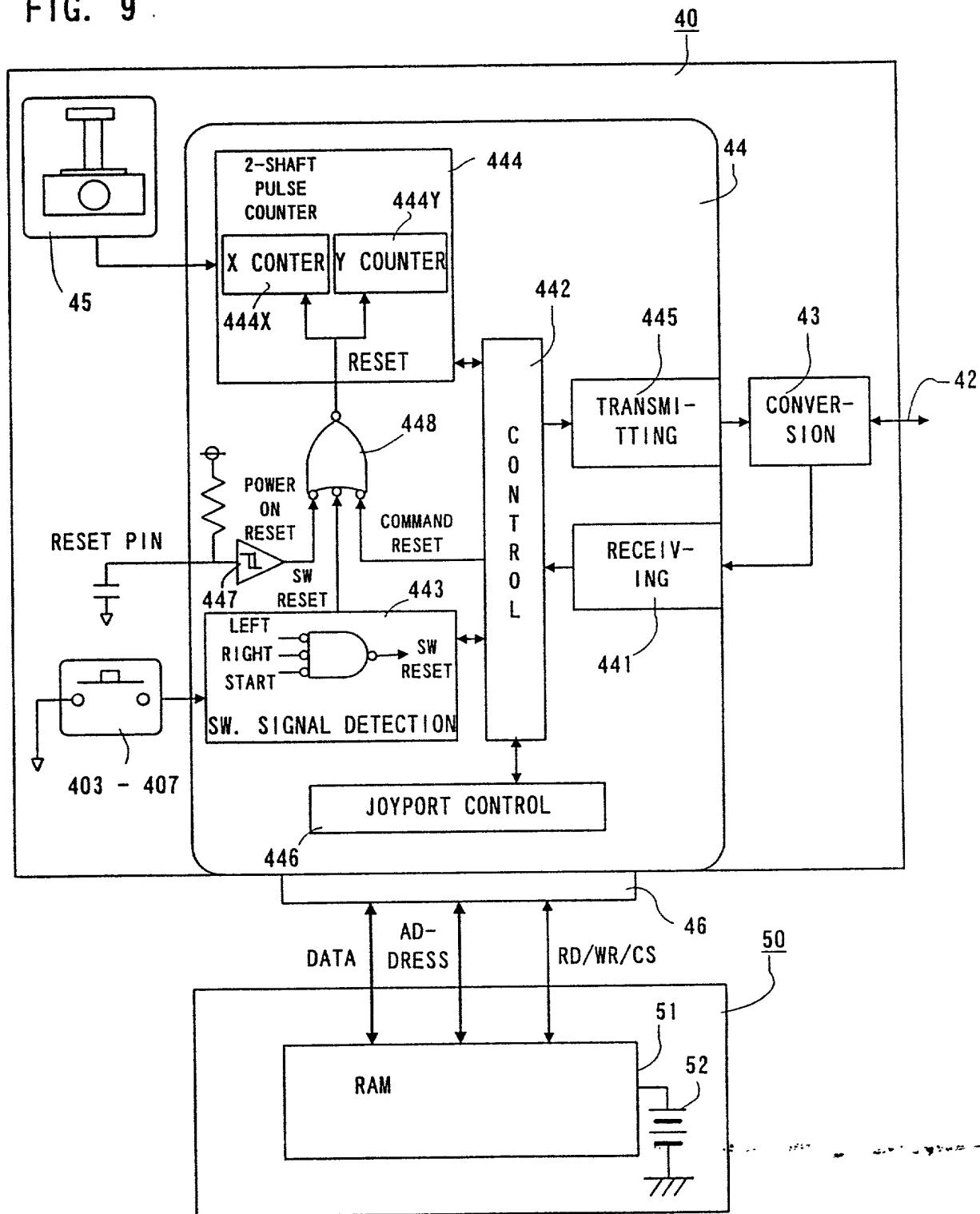


FIG. 10

FIG. 11

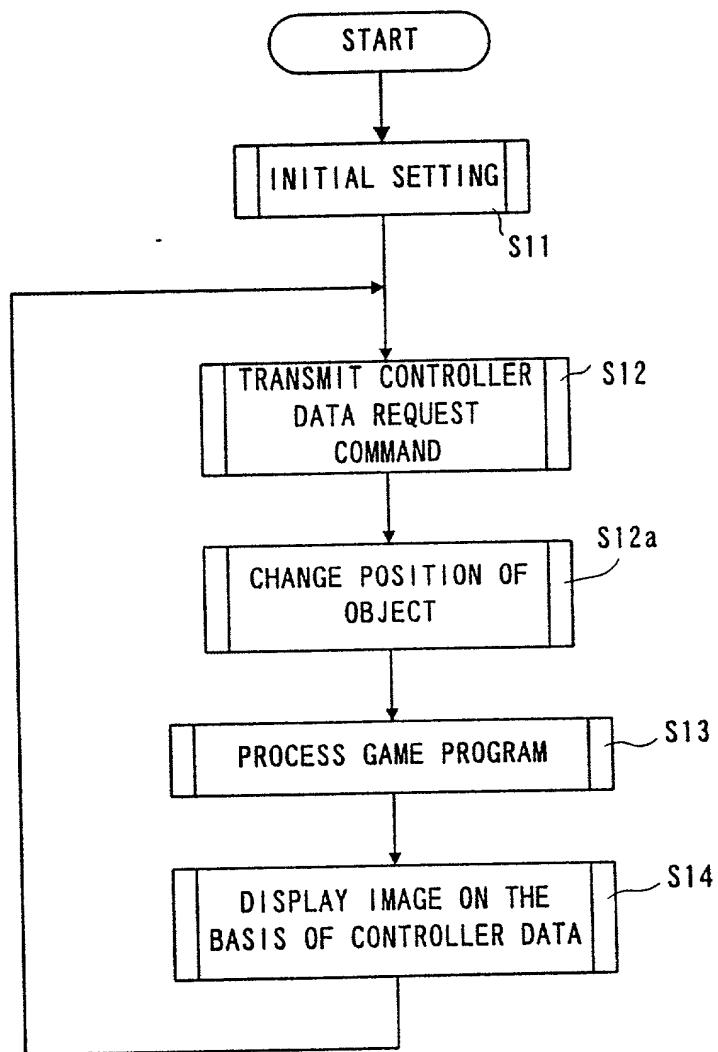


FIG. 12

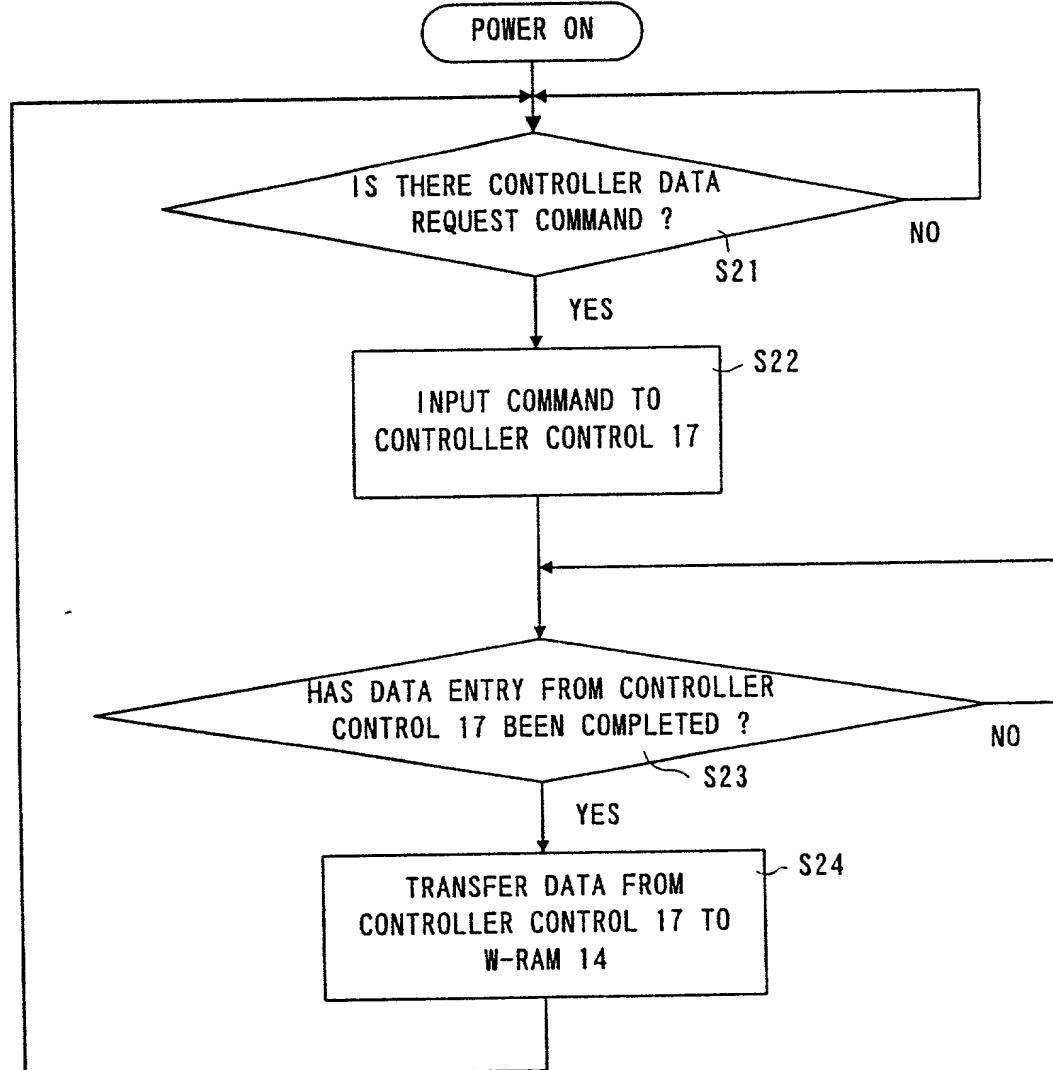


FIG. 13

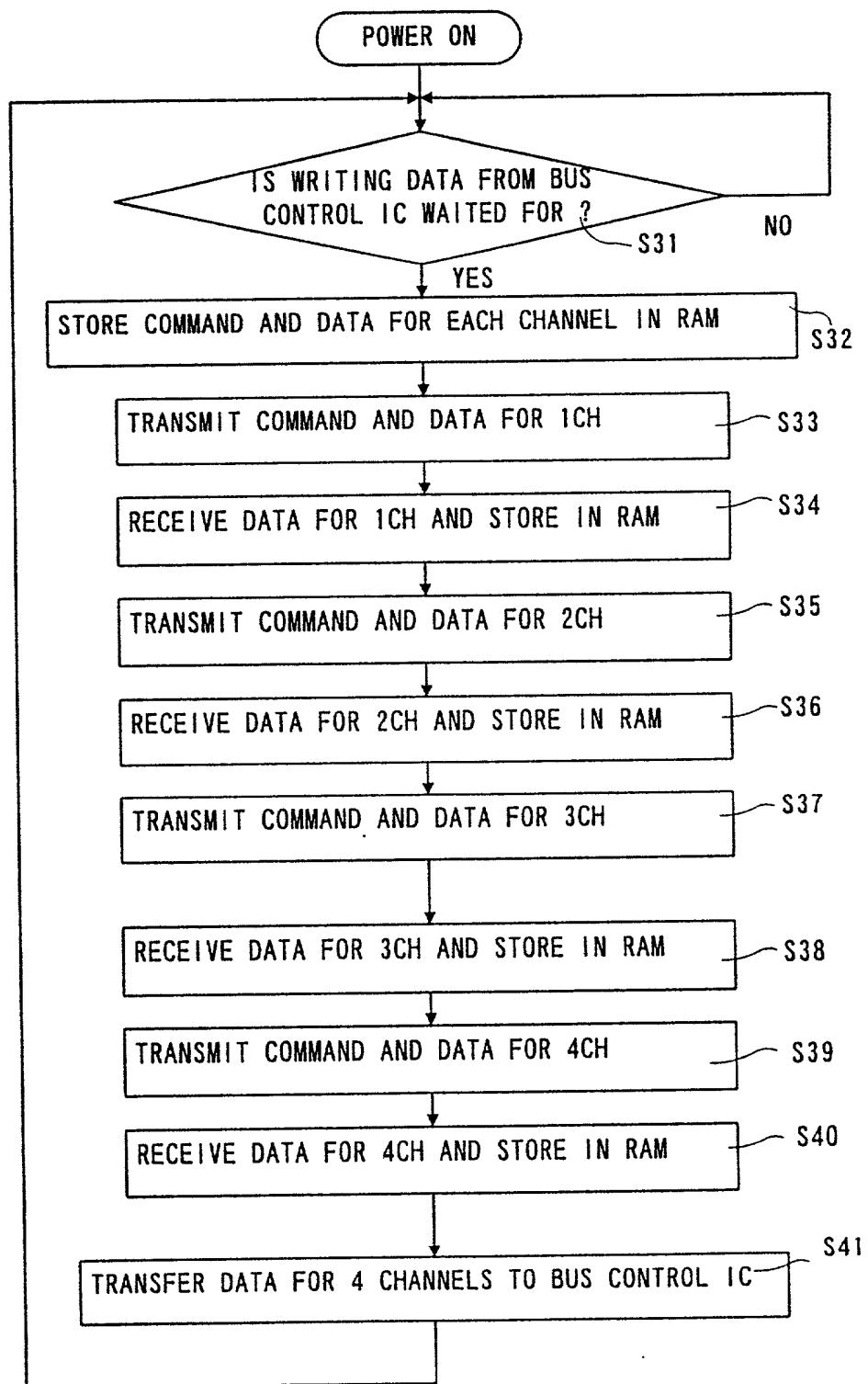


FIG. 14

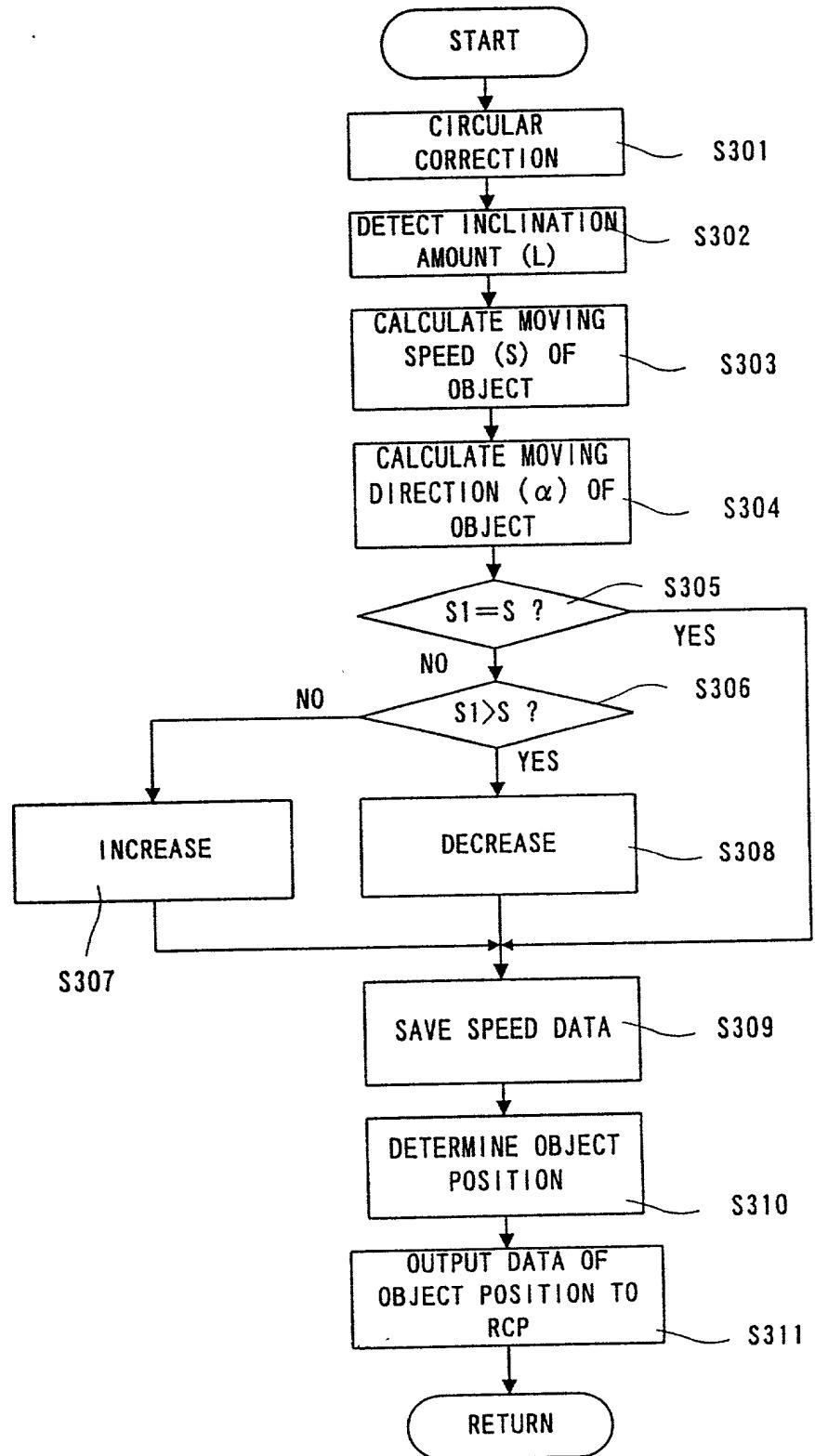


FIG. 15

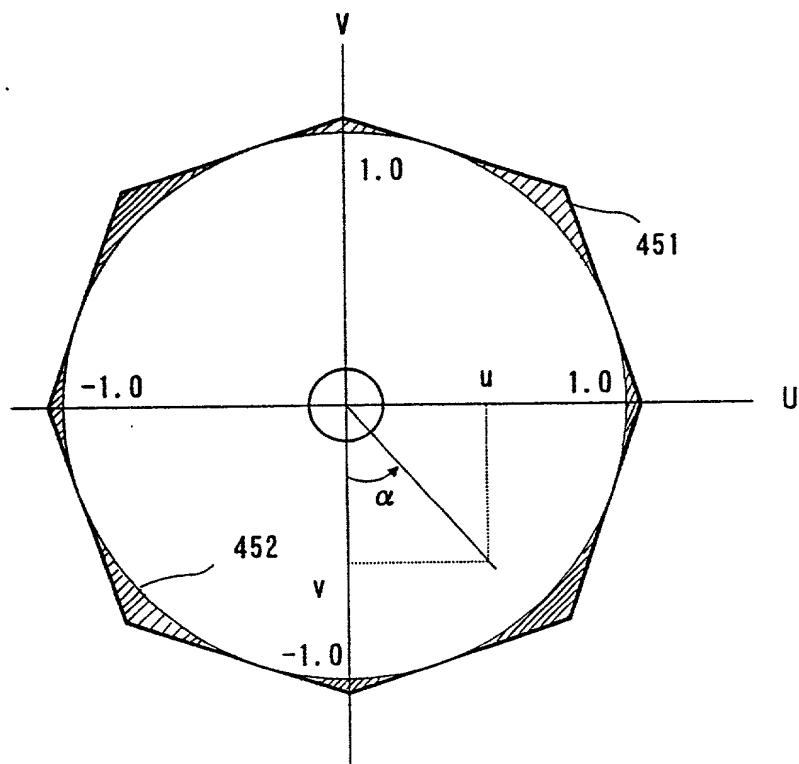
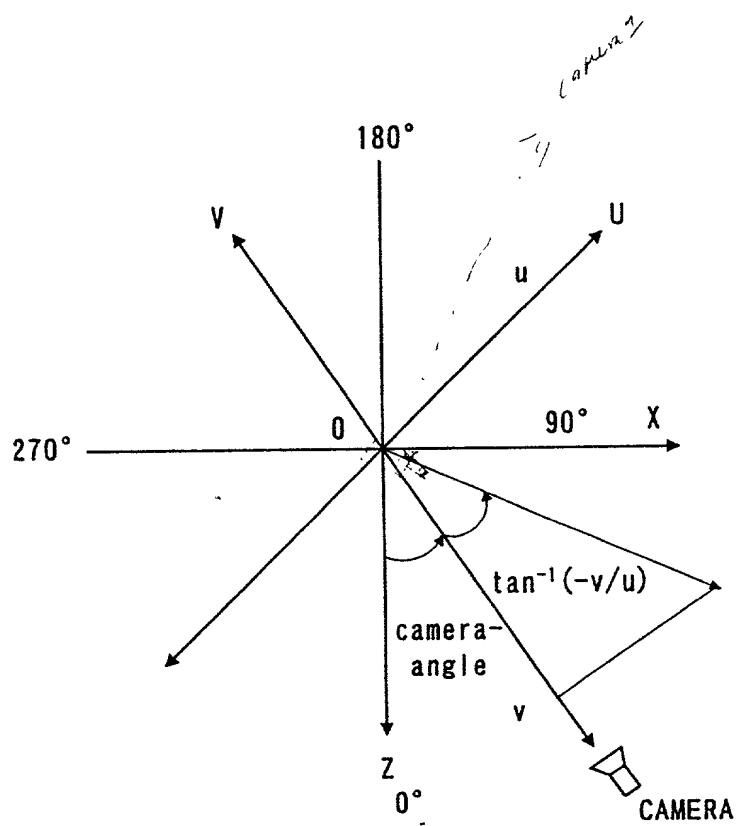


FIG. 16



DECLARATION

I, Yoshito Yamada, c/o YAMADA PATENT OFFICE of The Tanabe Bldg., 6-6,
Fushimimachi 2-chome, Chuo-ku, OSAKA, Japan, declare that I am the translator of the
documents attached, which are to the best my knowledge and belief a true and correct
translation of International Patent Application No. PCT/JP96/02726.

DATE: April 30, 1997

Signature of translator


Yoshito Yamada

RULE 63 (37 C.F.R. 1.63)
DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR PATENT APPLICATION
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name, and I believe I am the original first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

THREE-DIMENSION IMAGE PROCESSING APPARATUS

(the specification of which (check applicable box(s)):

is attached hereto
 was filed on _____ as U.S. Application Serial No. _____ (Atty Dkt. No. 723-531)
 was filed as PCT International application No. PCT/JP96/02726 on 20 September 1996
 and (if applicable to U.S. or PCT application) was amended on 2 April 1997

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability of this application in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.56. I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119/365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed or, if no priority is claimed, before the filing date of this application:

Prior Foreign Application(s):

Application Number	Country	Day/Month/Year Filed
<u>7-288006</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>9 October 1995</u>

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number	Filing Date
--------------------	-------------

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120/365 of all prior United States and PCT International applications listed above or below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in such prior applications in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in 37 C.F.R. 1.56 which occurred between the filing date of the prior applications and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

Prior U.S./PCT Application(s):	Day/Month/Year Filed	Status: patented, pending, abandoned
<u>PCT/JP96/02726</u>	<u>20 September 1996</u>	<u>Pending</u>

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon. And I hereby appoint NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C., 1100 North Glebe Rd., 8th Floor, Arlington, VA 22201-4714, telephone number (703) 816-4000 (to whom all communications are to be directed), and the following attorneys thereof (of the same address) individually and collectively my attorneys to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and with the resulting patent: Arthur R. Crawford, 25327; Larry S. Nixon, 25640; Robert A. Vanderhye, 27076; James T. Hosner, 30184; Robert W. Farls, 31352; Richard G. Besha, 22770; Mark E. Nusbaum, 32348; Michael J. Keenan, 32106; Bryan H. Davidson, 30251; Stanley C. Spooner, 27393; Leonard C. Milchard, 29009; Duane M. Byers, 33363; Paul J. Henon, 33626; Jeffry H. Nelson, 30481; John R. Laslova, 33149; H. Warren Burnam, Jr., 29366; Thomas E. Byrne, 32205; Mary J. Wilson, 32955; J. Scott Davidson, 33489; Jerry D. Craig, 38026.

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and attach sheet with same information and signature and date for each.